

MY LITTLE PART

IN

A BIG WAR

BY

ALVIN S. MELA
FIRST LIEUTENANT, U. S. A.

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To

MY MOTHER AND SISTER,

who have always understood me better
than anyone else, and whom I have
always admired for it as being able to
do more than I can, I dedicate this book.

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FOREWORD

From a letter dated February 20th, 1918, written in Paris to my old and intimate friend, M. Leo Sipser, I quote the following:

"So you think my letters would make interesting manuscripts? Well, all I can say is that if they were written in disappearing ink, they would have unlimited circulation in every blind man's home in the country! Those are about the only places and under the only conditions wherein they might be appreciated. But thanks for the compliment just the same. Who ever heard of me as a man of letters!"

I have not changed my opinion in the slightest degree, and I am compiling this narrative of my experiences and impressions to bolster my memory in future years—to keep me from forgetting the hardships and pleasures, the work and the play incidental to my stay in France as one of the American Expeditionary Forces sent to that country in the great World War of 1914-1918.

The letters that follow were passed by the Censor in much the same form as they appear here. While gathering them together for this narrative, I have added dates, geographical locations, names of persons, and other details, which at the time of writing were forbidden by the General Orders covering Mail Censorship. I have also expanded some notes from my diary.

ALVIN S. MELA.

On March 25, 1917—twelve days before America declared war on Germany—I went to Governor’s Island, N. Y., with my brother Harry, for my first infantry drill. These drills were unofficial affairs fostered by Capt. A. L. Boyce, of “Boyce’s Tigers” fame. A few days later, I sent in my application for examination for the Officers’ Reserve Corps, and was informed that I was to go before the Examining Board on May 13th. This method of admission to the O. R. C. was changed in favor of the Training Camp Plan, and I was ordered to take a physical examination on April 25th. I passed this easily, and early in May received notification to report at the Officers’ Training Camp at Plattsburg Barracks, N. Y., on May 15th.

The three months that followed were ones of hard and serious but healthy work. I was successful to the extent of being commissioned a Second Lieutenant of Infantry on August 15th. I was in the Tenth Company of the Second Provisional Training Regiment, and along with eight other men in the company was ordered to report to the Commanding General at Hoboken, N. J., on August 29th for immediate service overseas, but no transportation was available until September 7th.

SEPT. 7TH.—Although I reported at 9 A. M. to the U. S. S. “Huron” (formerly the “Kaiser Friedrich der Grosse”) at Pier No. 2, Hoboken, we did not finally get away from the pier until six o’clock in the evening. All khaki-clad men were ordered below decks, so that in going down New York Bay not a man was in sight except sailors on duty. We passed the Statue of Liberty in her flood of light, going to the country that gave us this remarkable symbol of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Our

thoughts naturally turned to wondering when we would see her again—if we ever would!

The convoy consisted of five other transports, a supply ship, two destroyers and the cruiser "Huntington."

I had a perfectly delightful trip and was not seasick a moment, nor did my stomach even feel queer at any time. I ate like a starved animal and slept like a log. Never felt better in all my life. Several of the days were rough, however, and on two occasions only half of the officers showed up at meals.

Submarines? Huh, I didn't see a sign of any of them, tho, as a precaution, no lights were permitted after dark, excepting the blue dead-lights below decks. We had to undress in total darkness. It was great work, stumbling around the unlit ship to find my stateroom.

SEPT. 20TH.—This marked our entry into the Port of St. Nazaire (Loire Inferieure), France. The day broke foggy and rainy, but cleared up toward late afternoon. We proceeded up to within four or five miles of the port, took on a pilot and then waited until 3 P. M. for the tide to change sufficiently to permit us to get in. We went through a tortuous channel in the mined zone off the port, and promptly at 5 o'clock the 23rd Regiment Band, which was with us on board, played the "Marseillaise," as we entered the locks. What a wonderful greeting we got! You would think that we were home-coming conquerors, and not an expeditionary force just landing! The quay was lined with men and beautiful French girls—many in black, it is true—anxious to cheer us, our country and theirs, and to throw us fruit and cigarettes. The shout-

ing and cheering made a babel of sound I will remember for many long years to come.

SEPT. 21ST.—We were held on the ship until 4 P. M. It was a long, dull, irksome wait, but when we got off, we made up for lost time and motion. St. Nazaire is a quaint town to urban American eyes. The streets, shops, cafés, people, wagons, in fact the very atmosphere is so different from what I have been brought up to regard as commonplace. I had my first meal on shore and returned to the ship at 9.15 P. M.

The following humorous incident shows the difficulty of conversing with the natives, many of them having a smattering of English. One of us tried to tell a girl that he had a friend in Texas. She interrupted with "Oui, oui, monsieur, je comprends; he run a taxee!"

SEPT. 23RD.—I fell in with Capt. Halloran of "A" Co., 23rd Infantry, and we spent the day together. I did not return to the ship, but bedded down for the night in the officers' quarters of the 23rd Regiment. The Captain loaned me his canvas bedding roll which I spread on the floor. A Lieutenant gave me a blanket to serve as a mattress, and another Captain loaned me a pair of blankets to cover myself. Thus I spent my first night on French soil, and I slept soundly too. I had slept on board ship the previous nights.

SEPT. 25TH.—I received orders directing me to go, in company with nineteen others, to the Fourth British Army Sniping, Observation and Scouting School at Bouchon (Somme).

SEPT. 26TH.—We left for Boucheon, arriving the following morning, after an all day and night ride.

At the school we were informed that we had not been expected until the 30th and that we could have passes to go to Paris or Amiens until 8 o'clock that morning. I chose Paris.

SEPT. 27TH-30TH.—My first stay in Paris was naturally of great interest, but, as I spent so much time there later, I shall omit all details of this short visit.

LETTER, BOUCHON, OCT. 2ND.—I am billeted, along with 1st Lieut. Wm. H. McLaughlin, with the village schoolmaster. We have a large room, very clean and airy, and as far as the accommodations are concerned, one could hardly expect more in any small town anywheres. We try to talk with the schoolmaster and his wife. We find it is difficult, but manage to make ourselves understood (at times) with the aid of a French-English, English-French dictionary and plenty of sign language.

The kindness of the rural French folk toward the Americans is illustrated by the old schoolmaster and his wife waiting up until 11 o'clock to give us hot coffee on two cold and rainy nights, when we were on outdoor exercises.

LETTER, CHAUMONT (HTE. MARNE), OCT. 18TH.—I left Boucheon yesterday, and am spending the night at American Headquarters. We had a miserably slow trip here, lasting twenty-five hours, and arrived in a more or less disreputable condition. With due respect to French passenger trains, I now have a wholesome regard for an American way freight on a backwoods jerkwater railroad! Sleeping cars to Americans in France are only a mem-

ory of the States, and the best we can do is to bed down for the night as comfortably as we can while reclining in our seats. At that, you can judge how much better off we are than the poor chaps who have to ride in box cars. Of what is in store for us, I have not the slightest idea, and since joining the army, I have come to realize the futility of trying to foretell just what to expect.

The course at the school at Bouchon was one of unusual and varied interest, and all of us thoroly enjoyed it. Compared to Training Camp, the work was very light, inasmuch as we only worked about seven hours a day, tho some days we put in somewhat more.

Since my last letter, I have spent two enjoyable week-ends in Paris, and the more I see of that city the better I like it. I had hoped to get there again before coming here, but my orders prevented my doing so, and probably it is just as well.

LETTER, DEMANGE-AUX-EAU (MEUSE), OCT. 21ST.—At last I have reached the end of my travels, at least for the time being. I am now billeted in this small town, with the 16th Regular Infantry, and have been attached to Company "I" for duty.

The original party at the British Sniping School has been split up, only five of us coming here. McLaughlin is one of them.

LETTER, OCT. 25TH.—Since reporting here for duty, I have had more new situations to face and overcome than one could imagine. Last Sunday I took my platoon a little ways out of town on a twenty-four hour outguard, which went thru without incident. Then on Thursday, I acted as range officer while the men went thru target practice, and the culmination of the week of sur-

prises was being ordered by the Commanding Officer to defend a private before a Special Court Martial! I knew I am not quite as good as John B. Stanchfield, as my man got the limit, but I really believe he deserved it. All he did was to disobey his corporal, call him vile names and wind up by assaulting him. But I did the best for him that I could.

LETTER, OCT. 25TH, TO P. A. DILLON.—I am “somewhere in France” all right, in the midst of the rain and mud, tho at this particular moment the sun is making a valiant effort to assert itself. Mud, mud, mud—slimy, sticky, slippery, sloppy ooze—it’s awful! I have never seen anything in the States that even nearly approaches it for sheer disagreeableness, but it is no worse for me than it is for thousands and thousands of others, so I am complaining no more than my share. The rain and mud, both of which are almost continuous, make work almost unbearable that at most times would not be so bad at all. And this is the country that we will have to fight in! The people back in the States have no conception of what we are putting up with, and I hope someone will start a campaign of enlightenment that will wake up the American nation.

LETTER, OCT. 25TH, TO M. L. SIPSER.—In passing, permit me to pay a glowing tribute to the women of Paris in the following selected and carefully chosen words: # \$? ; ¼ ½ % / ¾ * @ & (2 !! It is a wonderful spot, and in all your long and varied experience on the road, you have never, never seen anything like it.—Now, as to the city by day. Well, the fact is I did not see enough of it when artificial light was unnecessary to make any very definite

statement, but after reading several guide (?) books, I agree with Baedeker in all that he says

OCT. 27TH.—I spent the week-end in Nancy (Meurthe-et-Moselle), and among other things got a much-needed hot bath. This is worthy of note, as they are luxuries in rural France in peace times, and almost unknown since the summer of 1914.

LETTER, NOV. 6TH.—To-day is Election Day, but I beat the home folks to it this year by voting on Saturday last. The election job business follows me around the world, so I acted as Chairman of the Board of Inspectors for the "16th Regiment of Infantry, at present in France." You know that the new Election Law provides for New York State voters on military service outside of the State being given an opportunity to vote, and quite naturally I would not overlook the chance.

Talk about coincidences, listen to this one! Scene: The room occupied by 1st Lieut. William A. Dashiell, M. O. R. C. (Surgeon of the 3rd Battalion). Time: 8 P. M. I said I am anxious to return to the States if only to go back to the High School of Commerce in uniform to show them that I was doing something, whereupon the medico asked me when I had graduated. I told him I had been a member of the February 1907 Class, and he answered that he had been in the June 1907 Class from the same school! We naturally got to chinning, and I soon remembered that I had known him well in school, and that he had known me. After graduating from school in 1907, he moved to Little Rock, Ark., studied and later practiced medicine, then married and had a family, but felt the call of duty, and joined the Medical Officers' Reserve

Corps. And here he is, somewhere in France, eating at the same mess with me!

As to my health, I am a little out of luck at last. My famous "Baseball Knee" (the left one) has gone back on me a trifle, and at present it is bound up with adhesive tape to support the ligaments. Dashiell calls it "a slight arthritis," which, translated into the language that one does not have to pay for to hear, simply means "most unpleasant and annoying." But it is nothing to worry about, for I went to business many a day with that knee feeling just as bad as it does now, and sometimes worse. Otherwise I am feeling just fine.

Nov. 7TH.—I was selected by my Company Commander last night to go up to the line two days in advance of the Company, and consequently left Demange-aux-Ean Wednesday morning, November 7th, accompanied by two Sergeants, Trower and Simmons, from my Company. After an all-day motor ride, we arrived at Bathelemont (Meurthe-et-Moselle), a small, almost deserted and much shot-up hamlet about three kilometers back of the front line, where we found billets for ourselves in deserted houses.

My bedding roll, stripped down to bare necessities, was all the baggage I took with me, in addition to the full pack which I wore. The appearance I presented when loaded down with full war regalia must have been rather funny, for, in addition to the pack, I had my despatch case, field glasses, French gas mask and English gas mask slung over my shoulders, while on my belt were the regulation trappings. I was draped like a Christmas tree!

I made myself as comfortable as possible in this deserted house for the night, but about half-past two in the morning I was rudely awakened by a

most unearthly explosion, being almost thrown out of my bunk. It was the bursting of a Boche 105-mm. shell about two yards in front of the doorway of the house, and about fifteen yards from where I was peacefully sleeping. I did some real honest Yankee cussing, and decided that an investigation of the shell hole could wait until there was more light, so I went to sleep again. Upon coming out of the house in the morning, I had to make a wide semi-circular detour to avoid the hole. A remarkable thing about the explosion was that it did not break a single pane of the glass that still remained in the windows of the house in which I had been sleeping, tho there was plenty of broken glass in windows of neighboring houses.

NOV. 8TH.—About 9 o'clock on Thursday morning, I left for the front line with the Sergeants and a guide, for my first look at real trenches. After wandering thru the maze of trenches for a couple of hours, we started on our way towards the kitchen of the Company that was occupying this sector—"F" Company of our Regiment. It was at 11.30 A. M. when I got under shell fire for the first time in my life. There was nothing for me to do but to drop to the bottom of the trench just as hard and fast as I could, and I "stood not upon the order of my going." I broke all records for rapid falling! When I mentioned this little incident to one of the officers of "F" Company, all I got was a laugh and this pleasant bit of advice: "You ought not to be such a darn fool as to be in a communicating trench at chow time!" But none of the shells fell any nearer than to throw a little mud on me. We remained for the balance of the day, circulating about the first line and support trenches, and just

about dusk returned to Bathelemont, again conducted by a guide.

Nov. 9TH.—Friday was quiet until after dark, when my Battalion arrived, and then it was my job to see that my Company was billeted properly and promptly, according to information and instructions I had received earlier in the day.

I received my first mail from the States, ten letters being brought to me from Demange by Sgt. Beaver, and there in Bathelemont, by the light of a dismal candle, in a tumbled-down house, three kilometers from the front line, I read the first letters from home. I was a happy boy then—can you doubt it?

Nov. 10TH.—Saturday was spent in resting and inspection of equipment, and after dark the Battalion went up to the line, each platoon being led by a French guide. The distance was only three kilometers, but it proved to be hard going, being loaded down like pack-mules. We got there without incident, and then my platoon, being the reserve platoon, unloaded the supplies and ammunition, and distributed both. We had to provide the kitchen police details, the kitchen being under my charge. We worked like beavers until 3 o'clock Sunday morning. The mud bothered us greatly, the wagons getting stuck at a considerable distance from where we wanted them. The men at first seemed inclined to fight shy of the mud, so I just waded into it (or rather sank into it), and then they followed me quite willingly. There was no more trouble on that score again; that was the first and the last of it. Good Lord, but it was hard work, and I am thankful that Fritz let us alone while we were doing it. I was almost covered from

head to foot with mud, and when the job was finished I was tired—and sadly in need of a manicure.

Nov. 12TH.—On this night I took out my first patrol. It consisted of twenty-three non-commissioned officers and men. We went over the top and thru our wire at 6.30 P. M., it being absolutely dark then, and returned about 11 P. M. I had 2nd Lieut. Gallbreth of the reserve company with me. He had asked his and my company commanders for permission to accompany the patrol, which of course, regardless of seniority, left me in command. We had illuminated compasses, and he led the way back, getting off his course about five degrees. I remained with the automatic rifles with the rear guard, and while I knew that we were shifting direction, there was nothing I could do in that intense darkness but to keep on going, and when we hit something, to make the necessary corrections in direction in order to get back. We hit something soon enough in the form of one of our machine guns, and the gunner was not asleep on post either. He heard us coming up to our wire, and opened fire on us. We hit the ground again! I passed the word along to the men to slide down the hill backwards on their bellies, until we reached a spot where I knew there was some dead ground. Then we had a real cute council-of-war right out in No Man's Land. I naturally first took the precaution of putting the automatic rifles out a few yards towards the German lines for protection against surprise. The Lieutenant and my two Sergeants tried to make me believe that we had gone too far to the left, and that we should turn toward the right, but I insisted that we were about two hundred yards too far to the right as it was. Being in command, I had my way, and we shifted sharply to the left, finally get-

ting back to the exact point from which we started, as a patrol is supposed to do. We were out as a combat patrol, but found nothing to combat. All we got was cold and stiff. Lying out on the cold ground at full length for about four and a half hours with very little movement does not keep the body very warm, I can assure you.

Nov. 15TH.—I went out on another patrol of twenty men, accompanied by the battalion intelligence officer, Lieut. Youngs. We remained out about the same length of time, were out for the same purpose, and had no excitement whatever. This time I saw two Fritzies silhouetted against the light of a flare, but being only two, let them alone; we were out after bigger game than two. We had no trouble getting back as on the other occasion. Lieut. Youngs had been out quite a number of times, and had a most excellent sense of direction. He guided coming back, and the way he seemed to sense his way in the pitch-black night was indeed a work of art.

No doubt you are wondering just what were my sensations the first time I went over. I will admit quite freely that if I had not had twenty-three men waiting for me to show the way, I don't believe I ever would have been able to lift my leg over the parapet. My heart seemed to be bulging out of my mouth and my nerves were all atingle, but just as soon as we were outside of our wire, I began to feel quite comfortable and at ease. At the moment of going over, I realized that if I did not go, I would be ruined forever, even if an account of it never reached the States, so I screwed up sufficient will power to make the necessary physical effort. Somehow or other, I believe that every one of us felt more or less the same way, but it was up to

me to show the way. I could not follow anyone else; by all the rules and practices of military science, I had to lead.

NOV. 17TH.—In the small hours of the morning we had a nice scare, altho it caused a good laugh afterwards. My platoon was ordered to reinforce the first platoon, and I was directed to take command of the second platoon sector, while the leader of that platoon was out on a patrol. Fritz started to shell the first platoon sector on my right, some of the shells dropping in my sector also. I awakened the Sergeant, who was off duty at the time, and with the two Sergeants started to make an investigation of the show. One of the Sergeants, a man who had seen active service in Mexico, jumped up on the parapet to get a look around, and he called to me in a hoarse whisper: "Come up here, Lieutenant, and take a look at *that!*" I got up, and he pointed out something most suspicious on the sky-line, just faintly showing in the darkness. We could see, or thought we could, a row of Boches in a quarter that would have meant a last prayer for all of us. I ordered the other Sergeant to send up an illuminating flare, while we got our bodies off the sky-line. Then the laugh came—it was a row of fence posts, artistically draped with masses of barbed wire, that, in the dark, fashioned themselves into most realistic Fritzies! I felt a little relieved, but to make sure I had another flare sent up. The phantom Dutchmen showed up in our rear, so I felt that I could not afford to take even the slightest chance.

I had a good practical joke played on me while in the line, and the instigator was my Captain. It was just noon, and I was asleep, having turned in

only a few hours before after a busy night. I was awakened by someone sticking his head into my dugout. The head was encased in a gas mask, and the first thing I realized was a voice calling in excited tones, "Wake up, Mela, *gas, gas!*" I sat bolt upright, held my breath, and stretched my hand instinctively toward where my gas mask always was while I slept. But it wasn't there! I took a quick look around and discovered it in quite another place, reached for it, and put it on in a hurry. About thirty seconds after that, someone came in and told me that there was no gas, and that it was all a joke. But I had recognized the voice that had done the calling—it was another one of the Lieutenants. The joke was on me just the same, so I squared accounts by buying the wine for our officers' mess when we got back to Demange.

I have a little souvenir that I picked up in No Man's Land in the shape of German telephone or telegraph wire. We picked it up and cut it on my first patrol. It was stretched across from the Boche trenches, and was used to tap our telephone circuit to the rear.

I went up to the line with my knee in bad shape, but in a few days it disappeared entirely. It looks as tho Dashiell, who suggested that I be put on light duty, did not know what was good for me, or perhaps his idea of light duty was life in the trenches!

Let me say a word concerning the morale of the men. *It was excellent in every way.* I put that in italics to emphasize it to the utmost degree. You must realize that the work is the hardest of the hard, the hours long, the eternal watchfulness most trying on the nerves, and at times it is not possible to feed just as you would like to. The mud was everywhere, our feet were more often wet than dry,

only some of us being fortunate enough to have rubber boots, and when we wore them, we slipped more than we walked. The weather was very cool, and the long fourteen-hour nights were raw and chilling to the very bone. The sleeping quarters were for the most part bad, tho I was lucky in having the best dugout in the entire Company sector. I shared it with a Machine Gun Company Lieutenant (a West Pointer) and a French Machine Gun Lieutenant. It was fairly dry, and the bunks were elevated off the floor. But most of the dugouts were wet, water seeping thru the roof all the time, and all of them were damp. In spite of all these and many more discomforts, the morale of the men was excellent. For instance, once, after the men had done about twenty hours straight, I asked for volunteers to do a certain job, not dangerous but just plain hard work, and practically the entire platoon stepped forward. Yes, the soldiers acted like MEN, never complaining and always willing to obey the most insignificant order. Their particular delight was to be selected to go out on a patrol. You would then see them for an hour or more, oiling their rifles to make sure that they would work properly, blackening their bayonets most carefully, examining the hand grenades to make certain that they were not defective, all the while keeping up a running fire of good-natured banter with those who could not go. It was a pleasure to share the hardships with men like that! And I have not the slightest doubt but what my experience in this regard is just the same as that of every other American officer.

The food was very fair. We only ate twice a day, but both meals were substantial, and we had hot coffee at midnight, which was served to the men on guard without their leaving their posts. Mid-

night coffee under trench conditions is a necessary stimulant, and if it had not been for that, I don't know how the men could have got along until morning. If the coffee was not hot (had cooled off while being brought to them), they would drink it just the same without the least word of complaint. That is the kind of spirit that is going to accomplish much in this war!

Walking about those trenches in the dark is a harder proposition than a promenade along the Gay White Way. It is a wonder that I did not, on more than one occasion, skin the bridge of my nose. The way that I used to bump into traverses was almost comical. I would come out of a dugout to make a tour of inspection, and of course my eyes would not be accustomed to the dark—"light blindness" they call it. Before I could really see things, I was pretty sure to be stopped short by some very well-meaning and necessary traverse. The trench bottoms were in miserable condition for the most part, tho I had my entire platoon out one night laying duck-walks to improve this. All repair and maintenance work had to be done at night, making it a very slow and difficult job.

I have not yet made mention of the rats. I never in all my life heard such a variety of squealing and screeching as those pesky little rodents indulged in every night. They seemed to be everywhere, tho I did not see or feel many of them myself. I have heard many fantastic tales from the men, such as waking up and feeling one or more crawling over their faces and bodies, but I personally was spared this.

The only other animals I saw were cats. They were small, with round bodies and short, stubby, pointed tails. All shades known in cat-dom were represented. They were friendly little animals,

strange as it may seem, and once or twice one crawled up on my bunk with me when I turned in for a little sleep. And I did not chase it away, either.

In the matter of casualties, the Company was most fortunate. Altho "F" Company, which we relieved, had lost about twenty-five in killed, wounded and prisoners—about one-sixth of its strength—we only had one killed and four wounded, none of the latter seriously. Ours was the luckiest Company of the luckiest Regiment of the Division, and my platoon was the luckiest platoon in the Company, as there was not a single casualty.

Nov. 18TH.—We received the necessary order to leave the trenches, and shortly after dark my platoon set out. We were a tired outfit. It was a particularly black night, and when we reached battalion headquarters, I asked the Major to assign a guide to my platoon to make sure that we did not lose our way. The men were not in condition to wander all over the scenery in search of the way out, and I preferred not taking any chances on my knowing or losing the way. The Major supplied the guide, and it took us just one hour and a quarter to cover the three kilometers! We slipped and slid, avoided one water-filled shell hole only to overlook another, all the time strung out in single file. The other platoon leaders did not think of getting guides, and as a consequence strolled in even more mud spattered than we were, about two hours after we had reached Bathelemont. My men were asleep before the others came in.

That night I spread my bedding roll on the floor of a deserted house at about midnight, and at 3 A. M. I was up, got a hurried breakfast, took a snack of food to eat at noon, and set out in the

dark, to a point about five or six miles to the rear, where motor trucks met us to take us back to Demange. We arrived there along towards evening, had supper and turned in. Yes, I was tired, and slept long and peacefully that night, knowing that there was to be no reveille the following morning.

While in the trenches, my hours of labor were peculiar. It is shorter to mention my hours of sleep, as I usually slept from 8.30 or 9 A. M. until noon or 1 P. M. Tho this is not very much sleep for a stretch of ten days, the nervous tension of the work and the excitement were ample to keep me going in excellent shape.

Then came the job of cleaning up and taking a bath. What a blessing that bath was! I was a pretty dirty specimen, and it meant a lot of hard scrubbing to make me feel fairly clean. The men of our Company were pretty lucky in the matter of fleas and lice, only a very small percentage of them being afflicted with the pests. Personally, I escaped, but not because I had any better treatment than the men. Better luck, that's all.

LETTER, NOV. 21ST.—Mother dear, I am sorry that you were so uneasy because of not receiving a letter from me for a period of a few days. I try to write twice a week, but this is not possible at all times. I am doing my best, but mail service is different now than in peace times, and you must try not to worry. Don't forget that the first letter I received reached me nine weeks after leaving the States, and that is far worse than you have had to bear, even tho less can happen to you than to me. Should anything serious befall me, you will learn of it fast enough, never fear, so Mother, don't worry and fret any more than you have to.

LETTER, Nov. 28TH.—We have had two very hard, long days of drill in miserable weather and worse marching conditions. Tuesday it was snowing and raining, tho to-day it was only raining, but to make up for the lack of snow, our slum wagon did not reach us, so we had to go lunchless and coffeeless from breakfast to supper—eleven hours!

We use olive oil or mutton tallow on the feet, and I think that is what is keeping colds and pneumonia from getting the best of us. I use olive oil freely. It makes the feet smell (or rather stink), but it is an excellent preventive.

Below is a copy of the menu of our Thanksgiving Dinner, which proves the difficulties of feeding an army in France. The only deviation was that fresh geese was substituted for cold-storage turkey, which was not so unwelcome a change at that. It was an excellent meal, but of course I overate, and felt sorry for it afterwards.

COMPANY "I", 16TH INFANTRY
SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE

THANKSGIVING DINNER.
Nov. 29th, 1917.

M E N U

Pickled Onions	Pickled Beets	Olives.
Lobster Salad, Mayonnaise Dressing		
Roast Turkey, Cranberry Sauce		
Chestnut Dressing, Giblet Gravy		
Creamed Irish Potatoes	Cheese Straws	Candied Sweets.
Stewed Corn	Green Peas	String Beans
English Plum Pudding, Hard & Brandy Sauce		
Waldorf Salad		
Gold Cake	Silver Cake	Marble Cake
Ornamented Fruit Cake		
Peaches	Apples	Pears
Assorted Nuts		Raisins
Cheese		
Roman Punch		
Café Noire		

LETTER, BOVÉE (MEUSE), DEC. 2ND.—I'm like Clarence the Cop! Transferred again! The cablegram I sent to Harry yesterday probably proved rather interesting. I am now in the 165th Infantry, which as you will remember is the old 69th N. G. N. Y., one of the regiments of the 42nd ("Rainbow") Division. I got my travel orders at 4 o'clock Friday afternoon, November 30th, directing me to leave on Saturday morning at 8.30 for my present station. And here I am, tho at present I have not been attached to any particular company. That will take place to-morrow, without a doubt.

I got here from Demange by motor truck, spending last night in Vauconleurs (Meuse), which is Division Headquarters.

Demange is a metropolis compared to Bovée. At Demange we were on a railroad, whereas here we are eight kilometers from the nearest depot, which, by the way, is about as noticeable as a telegraph pole. The inhabitants of this place number just 250! It consists of two streets, a church on one and a café on the other, with a few houses and barns in between. Bovée cannot be mistaken for 42nd Street and Broadway during the theatre rush. Oh, it's a grand game, this!

I must say good night in order to beat my lone candle, which threatens to play the stellar role in "The Light That Failed."

LETTER, DEC. 3RD.—I have a fireplace in my room, and by using concentrated imagination, I make myself think that I am warmer. I guess the sight of the fire has its effect.

I have been attached to "D" Company.

LETTER, DEC. 5TH.—You will no doubt be glad to learn that I have just asked my landlady—all in

French, of course—to call me at 6 o'clock each morning or five or ten minutes before, and to direct my striker to someone who could do my laundry for me, inasmuch as she herself did no work of that kind. I am just beginning to get acquainted with this benighted language, and I don't think I could ever have learned it in the States. Anyone learning it outside of France is surely to be congratulated on his mastery of the language of Joan of Arc, who made this part of France famous. Pardon, I should have said Jeanne d'Arc, n'est-ce pas?

I have solved the mystery of my dyspeptic fireplace, and altho the wood is very wet and green, I am managing to get a comfortable amount of heat out of it. I still must keep close to it, for otherwise I could only see the heat without feeling it.

The country hereabouts is really beautiful, and I can understand now why all Americans do not believe in the "See America First" doctrine. This section must furnish many a charming view to tourists during peace-time summers. But now it is wartime and winter, and altho there are no signs of war here except the soldiers in town and the absence of male natives of army age, still we are close enough, when the wind is right, to hear the roar of the Allied artillery in the St. Mihiel sector. That noise robs the scene of its beauty.

LETTER, DEC. 9TH.—Dennis is an Irish jewel! But, of course, you don't know who Dennis is. Well, Dennis is my striker. I have dry wood, hence a good hot fire. Dennis got it. There is only one place where wood of that nature can be obtained. It doesn't grow that way. I didn't see Dennis get it, but it's here. So I suppose some "frog-eater" will be jabbering at a mile-a-minute (as is their wont) to the Adjutant that someone has stolen his

barn door! At that, I don't really know where it came from, for I ask no questions on some matters. Isn't it funny how phlegmatic a man can become?

These little French villages are funny when seen thru city-bred American eyes. Bovée is evidently four or five hundred years old, and to-day is living up to its age. Each house has two entrances, one an ordinary door, and immediately alongside of it a barn door. A thin partition is usually all that separates the pigs from their owner, and in many cases the partition is very necessary for the distinction to be obvious. The pigs mingle freely with the cows, horses, babies, chickens, dogs, grandmothers, house cats and other cats, mice and sheep! All seem to get on wonderfully and thrive on the close association. I dare say it is a gift to live that way, but I would much prefer my own (or rather former) style of living. I am happy that my billet is an exception. The live stock is not present in the flesh or in the nostrils. I have heard some officers remark how delightful it was "to go to sleep with the aroma of the cow and to wake up with the ditto of the sheep," the wind having shifted a few degrees during the night. The towns are quaint and the country itself is really pretty, but, as one bright soul remarked, he did not see why the U. S. was fighting for a rock pile! There are plenty of rocks around here, and most of the fields abound in them. They are small—just small enough to make walking a severe trial.

DEC. 12TH.—We started to make a change of station, the orders being that we were to walk. We were informed that the entire distance is about seventy-five miles and that we would make it in six days of walking. The first day we marched to Geranvillers (Meuse), where we spent the night,

and the following day we reached Grand (Vosges). The walking conditions were fair, with the air cool, and the roads for the most part being free of snow and ice. It was hard going for the company wagon, however, which was unfortunate for the men, as it meant late supper. We got nothing to eat at noon, there being no long halt and no facilities for eating.

LETTER, GRAND, DEC. 15TH.—This is a somewhat larger town than most of the others I have been in. I am billeted with most delightful French folks who cannot do enough for the Americans, perhaps because we are the first to be quartered here. After marching about fifteen miles on Thursday, when we arrived here I had to go Officer of the Day. I had the town presented to me, with no information except something like this: "Here's the town—post it!" I finally got to bed at 3.15 A. M. Friday, only to get up at 5.45. At 6 o'clock Friday evening I was relieved, and that I was dead tired you may be sure. I remained in bed until 9.30 this morning, took a hot bath, thanks to the combined efforts of my striker and my landlady, and then felt much refreshed.

I am charmed with the friendliness and hospitality of the French folk in this section. They do everything in their power to make us comfortable and "at home," and that goes a long ways toward making up for many of the petty annoyances of this life. Every wish—however expressed—is complied with to the last degree, and is greatly appreciated. I almost feel as tho I am going home when I return to my billet after the day's drill is over.

LETTER, DEC. 19TH.—Of all the funny notices I have ever seen, there is one here that holds the record. The town barber is in the French Army, and

of course away from home. His wife has become so tired of explaining to the doughboys that there is no one who can give them a hair cut or a shave, that she asked the battalion interpreter to write out a sign to be placed in the window, so everyone could see that the shop was not open for business. The sign reads: "The barber has gone to the war and will not return." Not much optimism displayed in that sign, is there?

LETTER, DEC. 25TH.—Merry Christmas! I hope you have one, tho for me to-day is much the same as any other day with the exception that we have no work to do.

Last evening some of the Sergeants fixed up a Christmas tree, using streamers of cut paper in lieu of tinsel, and cartridge shells in place of little trinkets. All the company officers were invited and asked to make a speech, tell a story or sing a song. I made a speech and spun a few dialect yarns. The fun lasted about two hours and was rather enjoyable. The men seem happy, altho their folks and friends are so far away, and I am joining them in that spirit. It is the only way to do under the circumstances.

Many Christmas boxes came in last evening, but I am not disappointed that mine have not reached me, which no doubt is due to my continual changing of station.

Christmas Eve, I was Officer of the Day again, and while there was no excitement of any kind, I saw one of the prettiest sights that I have ever beheld. Shortly before the men began to go to the village church, where the Regimental Chaplain, Father Duffy, celebrated Midnight Mass, it began to snow—soft, quiet and large flakes—and the ground began to cover immediately. The church

itself is an old structure, perhaps eight or nine hundred years old, ornamented with magnificent stained glass windows. It was not a very dark night by any means. Imagine, therefore, the falling snow, the outline of the church against the half-bright sky, the light streaming thru the stained glass windows of the church, the ground covered white, and the men in khaki and the villagers all converging toward the massive carved main door of the church! It was a scene such as one reads about in stories, but seldom has the good fortune to see. It was an ideal Christmas picture.

DEC. 25TH.—The mess sergeant prepared a very creditable Christmas Dinner for the Company, in which the officers shared. The dinner itself was really good, but the conditions under which it had to be enjoyed were not the best. I ate mine sitting on the wood pile in the cook shack, with all the good things mixed together on one dish, just the same as all the others had to do. But it tasted fine, even if the chestnuts were floating in the stewed corn and the turnips mixed with the plum pudding. In the evening, the officers of the Company had another dinner in one of the houses of the village, and while it was not as typically American as the other, it was excellently prepared and nicely served.

DEC. 26TH.—We took to the road again, and this time marched to Chalvraines (Hte. Marne), a distance of about sixteen miles. It continued to snow, and the ground was fairly well covered, making walking rather difficult. Likewise, it had grown quite cold and the wind blew strongly across exposed places. That night I had no sleep, merely getting three hours of so-called rest on a few pine

boughs in the corner of a deserted French army barracks, with only one blanket to cover me. It was too cold for sleep. I did not turn in until after one in the morning, having waited up for the company wagon to arrive, so as to be sure the stove was set up for the morning.

DEC. 27TH.—We marched to Noyers (Hte. Marne), the difficulties of the road increasing with almost every step. Some of the men seemed to suffer severely from bad feet, and the company officers, including myself, helped the men by carrying their rifles at times or taking their packs for a couple of miles, and I wound up the day by half-carrying one of the men whose feet went bad, for the last three miles.

DEC. 28TH.—The night found us in Neuilly-L'Evêque (Hte. Marne). We took a short cut for the last few kilometers, and, while it was shorter, it led us thru banks of deep snow on a by-road that had not been used by anyone since the start of the storm. It snowed on and off, and continued to get colder.

DEC. 29TH.—This was the last day of the march, and the night brought us to our new station, the town of Henilley-Coton (Hte. Marne). This was by far the toughest of the six days of walking. The wind was icy, the roads either being covered with snow or slippery as glass, and our hobnailed field shoes slid continuously.

Excluding the fact that there is more danger in the trenches, I consider that this hike was far more trying than the life in the trenches. It was a real hardship, especially when one considers that we

had nothing to eat at noon, and only one slice of bread, molasses and vile coffee in the morning. The evening meal was served at any hour when the company wagon arrived, and when it did not arrive until midnight, the men had to shift for themselves. At Chalvraignes, but for the kindness of the French Commandant of the town, there would have been absolutely nothing for the men to eat, and as it was they did not get supper until eight o'clock, having had their breakfast at half-past six that morning! The roads were so slippery that the mules could not pull the wagon, even after they had dumped off the officers' bedding rolls to lighten the load, which they did on the 26th. One day it took them eighteen hours to go fifteen miles, with a detail of sixteen men to help the four mules. The whole affair was a hardship, and I believe we felt it more keenly because we knew that we could have made the trip by train in one day—if the orders had read that way.

LETTER, HEUILLEY-COTON, DEC. 30TH.—The country hereabouts is really beautiful, but the difficulties of the road rather obscured all sense of the aesthetic. I came thru in good shape, tho my shoes were wet almost constantly. I wore the same pair of shoes that I had used in the trenches and they are about worn out, having holes in the soles of both shoes.

I hope to be able to change my underwear before long—and it is much too cold for cotton pajamas at night! I have, however, been able to get two baths this month, so I consider that I have had one bath and a half more than my share of luxury.

LETTER, NEW YEAR'S EVE.—To night does not mean a great deal to me. For me, the sun will

rise to-morrow on another day merely—not the first sun of the New Year. Sitting here with my lone candle, which has about one hour's more life to it—it is fitting that it should burn out before the end of the year—brings thoughts of our little gathering at home last year. Do you remember it? I know I do—in fact, it is only too unpleasantly on my mind at this moment. I say “unpleasantly” because of the difference in New Year's Eve this year.

It is now nearing ten o'clock; I cannot hear a single tin horn or rattler, the town is sound asleep, my fire is going out, and so is my last candle. Why waste two hours waiting in the dark for—what? No doubt, to-morrow's sun will have a cheering influence, and I will prepare for it with a good night's sleep.

So I'll stop now, by hoping that the New Year will bring happiness to the hundreds of millions of poor souls affected by this awful world's war.

LETTER, JAN. 2ND, 1918.—Just a line, close on the heels of my last one, to let you know that I have regained my mental equilibrium. I am in good spirits again! Speaking of spirits, I did not take a single drink on New Year's Eve or January 1st. Plenty of it everywhere, but I just did not feel like drinking.

LETTER, JAN. 5TH.—I am now the “police officer” of the town. No, I am not the chief of police; rather I am “Highway and Sanitary Commissioner.” It is my job to see that the boulevards are manicured properly, that latrines are kept clean and sanitary, that garbage pits are used for garbage only, etc. The military prisoners are assigned to the broom and shovel work, under my direction. I am relieved from company duties, so it is quite easy.

Instructive and interesting about sums up the situation.

LETTER, JAN. 12TH, TO P. A. DILLON.—Your letter of November 14th reached me about noon two days ago, and an hour later the little medal plus a borrowed safety pin adorned my left breast, there to remain both night and day. You see, it is too cold in the morning to take time changing from pajamas to underwear, so the latter has to do twenty-four hours' service. I fully appreciate the kindly and interested spirit which prompted you to send this medal, and I would be a poor sort of a narrow-minded, bigoted cuss if I did not wear it *all the time*. And should I lose it—and I hope I won't—I am going to make an immediate noise for another!

On January 12th the battalion surgeon ordered me to my quarters with 102 degrees of temperature, and an attack of laryngitis and bronchitis, which I had doubtless contracted while in charge of a fatigue party, sent to a neighboring town to get barrack bags and trunks. The party returned along the tow-path of a canal, in the rain, sleet and raw wind, and the ground was very wet. The pace was slow, and I could not move fast enough to keep warm.

JAN. 14TH.—While still in bed in my quarters, I received a special order directing me to report at Chaumont to the Chief Quartermaster, for assignment to temporary duty with the Quartermaster Corps. Tho sick, I got out of bed immediately, packed my trunk, and commandeered the company wagon to take my baggage to the railroad station, a mile and a half away. I was determined to get out of town before anyone had time to change his mind and countermand my travel orders.

JAN. 15TH.—I left town at about eight o'clock in the morning, which was the first train that I could get after receiving my orders. I spent five hours in Langres (Hte. Marne), waiting for train connections, and reached Chaumont at half-past six in the evening.

JAN. 16TH.—I reported to the Personnel Officer in the office of the Chief Quartermaster, and after I had been put thru an examination as to what I had done in civil life, I heard the most welcome news that I was to go to Paris! I reached there at 10 P. M.

LETTER, PARIS, JAN. 17TH.—Pursuant to a special order, I have been assigned for temporary duty with the General Purchasing Board, and am now stationed in Paris. The General Purchasing Board has offices in the Hotel Méditerranée on the Quai de la Rapée and purchases all the matériel bought in France for the A. E. F. From what I heard, I believe my past experience as a purchasing agent accounts for the assignment.

LETTER, JAN. 20TH.—I am now comfortably settled in the Pension St. Raphael, 5 rue des Pyramides, and my room is entirely in order, with everything in its place and a place for everything. All that I need now is a letter or two from home to make me happy. I have had none from you since the batch received about a month ago.

I am quite sure that I shall like it here. I have a nice large outside room, with plenty of shelf and closet space. The large window opens out onto a balcony of limited proportions from which I can see the statue of Jeanne d'Arc.

The attack of bronchitis and laryngitis which laid me up from Friday to Monday has passed and I feel absolutely well again.

LETTER, JAN. 25TH.—The work I am doing is interesting; it takes me almost all over the city, and into some of the suburbs as well. I have been given charge of the preparation and shipment of "dubbin," more commonly known as waterproof shoe grease. I suppose that I was assigned to this (with true army perverseness) because I know nothing about it at all! I am able to secure the use of a Ford for the big jumps, so I manage to get around fairly well. The chauffeurs are French veterans, most of them wounded to the extent of unfitting them for active military service. The one I had to-day has been cited four times for bravery, but you would never think it to look at him. He seems very quiet and retiring; but what a daredevil of a chauffeur he is! He was an aviator, which probably accounts for it.

The "pension" is a veritable house of all nations. There were six of us in the parlor after dinner a few evenings ago, and six nationalities were represented: France, England, Greece, Belgium, Mexico and the United States. In addition, there is, to my knowledge, an Arabian and an Italian. Everyone talks French—except myself—quite fluently and they get along real well. The Mexican, Italian and Arab sit at my table, and use Spanish a large part of the time for their conversation. Oh, it's a great little world I am living in—and interesting, too!

Send me some American milk chocolate and crackers! I can buy Unedas and hard tack at the commissary, but I do not like either over much, and French crackers are tasteless, the chocolate being

not much better. Ask anyone why, and the answer comes quite readily, "c'est la guerre." That expression covers anything in the line of poor quality, high prices or small quantity. I have, however, had some perfectly delicious French pastry, tho it is both hard to find and high in price compared to what it was before the war.

Living in Paris is ruinously high for a poor second lieutenant. To give you some idea of the cost of living here—a ten-cent cake of inferior chocolate costs 27 cents. I saw a sign this morning allotting families 21 pounds of soft coal a week for 38 cents. My seat at the movies last night cost 50 cents for a perfectly legitimate 15-cent show at home. Laborers here get 10 francs a day against 6 francs before the war, but say they cannot live as well, and I can easily believe them too.

JAN. 31ST.—I went thru my first air raid. The alarm sounded at about eleven o'clock, just as I was going to bed. I went to the window to get a view of the bursting shells of the barrage, then continued to undress and went to bed. I soon fell asleep, and read in the morning paper that considerable damage had been done and a number of people killed and wounded. Everybody in the house went to the cellar except me. Perhaps I was crazy not to, but I was tired and felt that there was safety in sleep.

LETTER, FEB. 2ND, TO P. A. DILLON.—Paris is nothing now compared with what it was before the war. The city is very poorly lit at night, and towards midnight it is almost totally dark. The restaurants stop serving and close at 9.30 P. M. Not all the theatres are open, but those that are

do a thriving business, the audience being largely made up of soldiers.

The crowds on the boulevards hold my interest at all times. Beautiful and cleverly dressed women with officers and men of all the Allied nations—the French, of course, predominating—are seen everywhere. There is no doubt now in my mind that everything that has been said about the beauty of the women of France is true—and they know how to dress, too.

FEB. 7TH.—A few days previously, I was made censor for the office, and became much disgusted with the love letters written by some of the men, who were—or said they were—lonesome in spite of Paris. It spurred me to writing verse (which I won't call poetry), altho it does not look like prose.

CENSOR NUMBER "A-8-4."

I'm the censor for this office of the Quartermaster Corps.
I read so many letters of the times spent long before—
In the days when all was happy in our distant native land;
O'er which I must cast hurried eye; and put my stamp by hand.

I read 'em all, and stamp once more
"Passed—Censor Number A-8-4."

I read appealing letters sent to girls who have to stay
From ardent lovers toiling here amidst the martial sway,
And I wonder if the things they do are all so sweet and true
As "I love you dear, I love no one, I love no one but you."

To which I wink, and stamp once more
"Passed—Censor Number A-8-4."

I wonder if that girl at home is just as sad as he
Who works by day, and then by night he promenades Paree;
If she pines away her dear young life disturbed by city's sights
Just as does her sweetheart on these dark Parisian nights?

I think I know, and stamp once more
"Passed—Censor Number A-8-4."

And lonesome hubby freely writes his lonesome faithful wife
Of little things that happen him to cheer his daily life;
The little things he wants to tell that make his life worth while—
(He mentions not the 'demoiselle who greets him with a smile.)

It seems all wrong. I stamp once more

"Passed—Censor Number A-8-4."

But wait 'til they get home again; 'tis then the trouble starts—
(I sure will be proficient in the art of breaking hearts;
I know so much of how they live—a song of happiness—
It's better for 'most any man than trips thru I. C. S.!)

I'm getting wise, and stamp once more

"Passed—Censor Number A-8-4."

I've fair become a cynic in this land of song and wine,
Where strive we must to drive the Hun to lands beyond the
Rhine;

I pray to find that I am wrong; it's other than it seems—
That truth and love will find their own when peace upon us
beams.

I hope they will, and stamp once more

"Passed—Censor Number A-8-4."

LETTER, FEB. 8TH, TO M. L. SIPSER.—I have received the smokes! They came at last, and I want to express my sincere thanks for your thoughtfulness and kindness. I can use them, and you may be sure I will. American cigarettes in France mean moments of comfort, and the atmosphere that makes one think of the land they came from! I say this from my experience in trying to smoke the perfectly abominable native contraptions. France has wonderful wine, women and song, but I cannot say the same thing of its tobacco.

LETTER, FEB. 11TH.—The Inspection and Delivery Division has been organized with me as its chief, and the work of starting things is considerable. I worked Friday and Saturday evenings until about 11.15, and Sunday from 9.30 A. M. until 5.30, so you can very well judge that I have been keeping myself out of mischief. As I now have

things in fair shape, I am going to take the evening off.

I have moved to a larger and better located room in the same house. At my suggestion, Capt. Carroll E. Robb, Q. M. C., and 2nd Lieut. John H. Brumhall, Engineers, moved a few days ago from their hotel to the "pension," and I wanted to be on the same floor with them. So now I have company in the evenings.

LETTER, FEB. 15TH, TO M. L. SIPSER.—Let me confide this much in you. There is no one on this earth who thinks more of his mother than I do of mine! I have heard reports from all quarters of mother's sound, practical common sense, and I am proud of her! She is indeed an object lesson to all other mothers. One expects stoicism from men always, from women rarely, and from mothers never; but mine, I see, is the proverbial exception. However, I often wonder, what is that dear little old lady really thinking about? What is beneath the veneer of calm patience? Perhaps it is better for me that I do not know.

I still manage to get my daily smile! I don't refer to booze, for while wine is plentiful, I do not drink too much. But I do continue to get my daily laugh out of life, and it is going to take more than this war to erase the smile that seldom comes off!

LETTER, FEB. 18TH.—We had an air raid last night. All lights were turned off, and Robb, Brumhall and I had a quiet smoke in utter darkness, to the tune of aeroplane motors and anti-aircraft guns. There was not enough doing to be really exciting.

LETTER, FEB. 26TH.—I was invited to a dance at the Soldiers and Sailors Club on Saturday evening.

thru the kindness of a lady attached to the American Consulate, but was obliged to turn it down as I had to work. Just imagine, having to miss a dance, and the first chance I have had in six months! Rather hard luck, but "c'est la guerre."

Only worked an hour and a half on Sunday morning, and in the afternoon took a long walk with Lieut. Bramhall. We started along the Rue de Rivoli, past the Place de la Concorde, to the Avenue des Champs Elysées into the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne, and then into the Bois itself. We tried to hire a rowboat on the lake, which, by the way, is quite charming, but I was informed that I would have to wait forty-five minutes until our turn came, so we decided not to. We then strolled aimlessly for a while and ended at a playground, where we found a couple of young Frenchmen throwing a tennis ball, and of course I "horned into the pastime." Before very long, I was joined by a hospital corps sergeant, the Frenchmen dropping out. The sergeant and I stood about seventy-five yards apart and began throwing flies to one another. In fifteen minutes we had a gallery of five hundred Frenchmen, grouped in the general form of a large oval completely surrounding us, to watch us throw the ball.

I really believe that baseball is going to become as much of a pastime in France as it now is in America, as the French are strong on sports.

LETTER, MARCH 3RD.—I went to the movies the other night, and one of the pictures portrayed a boy in the act of delivering a letter and running away before the person receiving it had a chance to tip him. I therefore knew that the picture was not French!

Tipping is as prevalent (and irresistible) here as wine, women and song, and goes hand in hand with them. Go to a show, buy your ticket, and you are not supposed to sit down in the seat you have paid for without tipping the girl who leads you to your seat. This applies even to the movies. But before you get to your seat, you are beset by a flock of girls, who air their small stock of English. They beg you to check your hat and coat, all for the sake of the few coppers that stick to their palms incidental to the taking of your things. Tipping for real service actually rendered always had my support, but begging for tips is about as mean a practice as I can think of. Of course, they are satisfied with small tips, but the Americans have, to a certain measure, spoiled them in this regard. They seem to think that fifty centimes is the smallest tip that an American should give, regardless of the size of the check or the character of the service performed, but I have become a perfectly good Frenchman regarding tips. Of taxi drivers, I won't speak at all, except that they never even say thanks for their tips, regardless of size.

LETTER, MARCH 10TH.—The air raid of March 8th was the third I have been thru. Lieut. Brumhall and I were out for a walk to the Place de l'Etoile, and had not quite reached it, when the first alarm was sounded. We went to the Place, and then waited to see what would happen. We could not see much as we were about two miles away from the point at which any damage was done. However, the flashes of the explosions lit the sky, the noise was very sharp and distinct and the vibration easily felt, tho it was plain that the distance from the scene was great.

One of the most interesting as well as humorous things I have seen, was the method used in stopping autos from going about with lights on after the alarm sounded. The crowd would shout "*la lumière*," following the shouting with generous handfuls of gravel thrown at the thoughtless (or traitorous) chauffeur, and the method, tho crude, invariably had the desired result. This is an excellent weather-vane of French temperament. I had my flashlight in my pocket, but was mighty cautious in its use.

LETTER, MARCH 14TH.—Take it from me, "they ain't no sech animile" as a "cushy" job in this man's army. In the Zone of the Advance, it is known as a "bomb-proof" job. Well, it isn't. That's all, it isn't, 'cause Fritzie won't have it so. Another air raid on Monday night last and it was a razzle-dazzle affair. I was out looking it over—foolish, you may think—and I distinctly heard the whistle of eight bombs, and of course heard as many explosions. I didn't like the whistle—judging from the sound, the bombs were too close—so I unconsciously flattened out on the sidewalk. I went down quickly, too, and am not ashamed to admit it. Oh, yes, it's a "bomb-proof," "cushy" job in Paris, I don't think!

I'm busy, too, for

It's work, work, work,

From morning until late—

It's work, work, work,

At rapid, endless rate.

What are you here for?

The Quartermaster Corps?

You are? Well, don't shirk!

YOU—work, work, work!

And it about hits the mark, too, for anyone who thinks that the Q. M. in Paris or anywhere else in the A. E. F. has a "cushy," swivel-chair time of it is making a big mistake.

LETTER, MARCH 17TH.—The work at the office moves along satisfactorily, but I confess that I vastly prefer American business methods to those employed by our French friends. They never seem to be in a hurry, and such a thing as making a promise of a date of delivery seems to be unheard-of. "Some time this week," "possibly in a few days," "just as soon as I can get a dray," "when we receive some material from our other plant," or "almost any day now," seem to be their acme of accuracy in the point of time. I am trying to get them accustomed to name a date on the calendar, and to insist upon their keeping promises. It is sometimes very exasperating work. I have a couple of interpreters doing the telephoning, and am getting them broken into this style of doing business. They know that there is no use of coming back to me with an indefinite promise, for if they do, I ask them "What does that mean?" and then they have to start things humming all over again.

LETTER, MARCH 21ST, TO P. A. DILLON.—The weather has been excellent, and I believe spring is here in reality. The trees and shrubs are beginning to bud, and it will not be very long before everything is quite green. We have many cloudless days, and I now understand how this country has earned its name of "Sunny France." It is really remarkable, for sometimes for a span of twenty-four hours not a single cloud crosses the sky, much less dims the brilliance of the sun. This is a wonderful

country, and it is the curse of the century that its beauty should be marred by this war.

LETTER, MARCH 26TH.—I eat lunch sometimes at a little restaurant in Avenue Ledru Rollin, where the quality of food is excellent and the speed with which it is served positively American. Such speed is a distinct novelty in France. In this restaurant it is "thirty minutes for lunch" instead of "two hours for dejeuner," and this is much appreciated by the Americans who eat there. The owner of the place is a Frenchman, who for eleven years was the chef of Mrs. Spencer Lorillard of New York City. He knows something of the American desire for haste and caters to it.

LETTER, MARCH 26TH.—I saw a copy of a cablegram to-day from the Adjutant General's office in Washington, granting my transfer from Infantry to Quartermaster Reserve Corps, the request for the transfer having been made at the "suggestion" of the Colonel, so as to make my work here more permanent. In consequence, I now sign myself "2nd Lieut. Q. M. R. C."

LETTER, MARCH 31ST.—Sorry, I did not get a long letter off to you last Sunday. As a matter of fact, Fritzle interfered with my plans. He started the long-range gun early Saturday and continued it Sunday morning. All the transportation lines were shut down temporarily and it was too near the end of the month for me to take a taxi, cheap as they are, so I slept late. One of the other boarders, a female, awakened me at seven-thirty to inform me that there was another bombardment. I just figured out that everything would be stopped, and went to sleep again until ten o'clock! It honestly looks as tho I have not lost my ability to sleep, does it?

IN PARIS.

The men up in the line
 Think the Q. M. Corps is fine,
 Doing naught but drink rare wine
 In Paris.

We do more than meet a miss;
 It's more than "hello" (kiss);
 This life is far from bliss
 In Paris.

If it wasn't for us here,
 Your life would be quite drear
 At the front this time of year,
 Far from Paris.

Warm socks and hats we buy,
 Grease to keep your feet quite dry,
 Which solves one reason why
 We're in Paris.

And we keep your bellies full,
 Buy your clothes and things of wool—
 Oh, it's labor, oft distasteful,
 In Paris.

We come early, and stay late,
 To keep things running straight;
 If we don't, we get the gate
 From Paris.

It's a job fit for the strong—
 You say—Wine, Women and Song?
 I haven't seen it in so long
 In Paris—

That I wonder quite anew
 If the stories can be true
 Of what the people do
 In Paris!

Now hark to one who knows;
 We do more than take in shows;
 We must stand both gaff and blows
 In Paris.

LETTER, APRIL 3RD.—We had another raid scare
 the other night, this time at the unearthly hour of
 3.15 A. M., the "all clear" being sounded at 4.30

A. M. I read this in the paper the following day, as I did not stay awake to hear it. I love my sleep too much. The long-range gun still keeps going from time to time, but we learned this morning that one of them had burst, killing five of the gun crew. Sales Boches!

Last Monday, while along the Boulevard at noon, on my way to get something to eat, I heard the report of a bursting shell, and got to it in short order. It went thru the extension at the rear of a store in Rue Faubourg Poissonniere, and buried itself in the cellar, exploding there, and mixing beds, china-ware, stone wall, flooring, etc., in a most fantastic way.

LETTER, LA FLECHE (SARTHE), APRIL 6TH.—Here I am at ten o'clock in the morning at La Fleche, about 255 kilometers from Paris! I have not been transferred again, for I am here only for the inspection of a large contract for coffins and crosses, and will return to Paris within a day or so.

I left Paris at 7.30 yesterday morning, and reached Le Mans (Sarthe) at 12.15. I had my breakfast and lunch in one, as I had no time before leaving Paris. I caught another train at 4.45 and travelled another hour to La Suze (Sarthe), then changed cars again, this time to a mixed train, and arrived here at just 8 P. M., twelve and a half hours on the way, and the distance only 160 miles!

At Le Mans, after eating dejeuner, I went out into the café, like a dyed-in-the-wool Frenchman, for coffee and liqueur. I seemed to do it as tho it had been my custom since boyhood. Then, having time, I looked the town over. It is a place of about 60,000 people, but at present it has many more because of the number of refugees that have come from around the active battle fronts.

While strolling around the market place, I spied an American officer leaning out of the window of a hotel; I hailed him and went up to his room upon his invitation. He is a First Lieutenant of Cavalry, and is in charge of the Railroad Transportation Office there. He has six men with him, they being the only Americans in the town. A good chance to learn French, but I would rather have a few more Yanks in my immediate neighborhood. After a chat of an hour or so, the railroad cavalryman and I went to the station, and I left town at 4.45.

In my compartment was a M. Voisin, a French gentleman-farmer, who spoke a little English, and we struck up a French-English conversation. He has a large farm with a pretty chateau at La Suze, where I next changed cars. He has given his chateau as a hospital, retaining only a small part for himself, and I received a most cordial invitation to visit him, should I ever find the opportunity.

The next train I took was a mixed train, and the joys of riding over a disjointed roadbed in a coach having an endless number of flat wheels cannot be imagined! I got here at eight o'clock, and there, backed up against the station platform, was a typical back-country 'bus, proclaiming to the world that the sleepy driver would take you to the Hotel de l'Image for five sous! I took it, and felt somewhat better after a well-cooked dinner and plenty of it.

This all takes place in Normandy. Of course, that means apples and cider. There seems to be an inexhaustible supply of both here, and while I like the apples fairly well, I don't think the cider compares to our ordinary American variety. The apple trees are just starting to blossom, and I have also seen some early wild roses budding beautifully. There are so many apples in this country, that they

rot awaiting transportation. How the bunch at the country store would revel at the apple-jack that could be made here!

La Fleche is a picturesque town of about 11,000 people, so I am told, and of course has its proportionate number of churches, dogs and soldiers. I am the only American here, so now it is "*ici on parle français*," and tho I no doubt use grammar and constructions all my own, I manage to make myself understood, and have not had to go hungry yet.

Just as I left the hotel to go to the coffin and cress factory, a garrulous old Frenchman, who spoke in a dialect that I did not understand any too well, heard the *patronne* direct me on my way, and tho it was "*tout droit*" (as most directions are in France, no matter how winding), he volunteered to guide me. We passed the Hotel de Ville and, after I had seen the sign, he announced proudly that it was the Hotel de Ville, to which I made remark that the one in Paris was no more beautiful, even if it was a little larger. We passed an old house, and he told me that it was the oldest in the town. It ought to be. I hope for the sake of the owners that there are none more ancient. And so on, until I reached the factory. And the diminutive little fellow—he looked like a gnome in a fairy tale—was proud to be able to walk thru the town with the first Yankee officer or soldier to set foot in this quiet little city. In fact, he talked so loud that if I were Tody Hamilton of Barnum & Bailey fame, I could not have asked for anything better to attract the attention of the populace.

The youth of the town, here too, has gone, and only the very young and painfully old can be seen

on the streets. There are a few French troops stationed here, but not many.

Taken all in all, weighing discomforts, most of which are due either directly or indirectly to the war, against delightfully beautiful quaintness, I admit freely that I love this country, and I hope to see it again!

LETTER, APRIL 8TH.—I am back in Paris. The train left La Fleche at 6.30 A. M., so I turned in early the night before, and got up at 5.15, had breakfast, and the same 'bus took me down to the station. I got into the same flat-wheeled coach that took me into the town, and I am now convinced that it is the only first-class coach on that particular streak of rust.

I had another breakfast at Le Mans, which was lucky foresight, because I did not get anything more to eat until I reached Paris, and got to my room. That was 4 P. M., and I opened the box of cheese crackers received from home, adding some Chester cheese that I happened to have there. But, of course, I was willing to eat again at dinner last evening.

We are moving into a furnished apartment. I packed my things last evening, and to-day I am going to move. Capt. Robb and Lieut. Brumhall moved last evening.

LETTER, APRIL 11TH.—I think that we have made a very wise change in moving to an apartment. We have a maid of the tender age of forty-five or fifty; she is an excellent cook, and takes good care of the place. I have to do practically all of the talking with Marie, the maid, for she does not know a single word of English, and the other boys do not

know even as much French as I do. When we bring home stuff from the Commissary, I even have to translate the labels on the cans!

The three of us are delighted with the change. We have three bedrooms, a parlor, dining room, kitchen, foyer and maid's bedroom, electric light, hot water, elevator, etc. The location, 79 Boulevard Raspail, is such that it only takes us about five minutes longer to get to the office in the morning. It is not far from the Luxembourg Gardens, and within easy walking distance of the Latin Quarter. At first glance, if nothing else, we are quite satisfied.

I have the following to offer, with humble apologies to Eugene Field. It is written about an incident which Capt. Robb told me happened some years ago, with his father as the principal character:

THE ASSAULT ON PRAIR' DU CHIEN.

There's a town in old Wisconsin where the things are always
green,
That's long been known in hist'ry by the name of Prair' du
Chien;

Tho it's shy on population, it has many liquor shops
And a most efficient brewery for mixing malt and hops!
And the people there were happy in the days when all was free,
Tho Dad had tried to close the town while he was on a spree.
(Which spree consisted mainly of securing evidence
On Sunday by partaking at the other chap's expense!)
Then he came home and told my Maw of how he had a drink;
And Maw, she sat down on the stairs and tried so hard to think
Of reasons why poor Dad should fall into such evil ways
While he was out crusading with two white-ribboned jays!

He started in the morning full of vim and righteous zest,
And came back in the evening with a few below his vest.
He was guided on the pilgrimage by Stuart—first name Joe—
There's no better man in Prair' du Chien than him (I'll have you
know)

To lead a temp'rance party from near or from afar
 To find old Chesky's, Quinlan's or the famous Sherman bar!
 Why, Joe's intuition has been known to lead him in the dark
 To places where there's liquor—and he's never missed his mark!
 A lantern's never needed where this guardian angel goes,
 As his steps are guided wisely by his brilliant ruddy nose!

They stepped into the Burlington to watch a little game;
 The limit was the azure sky—but things were running tame
 Until Ed Powers got a hunch and cracked it for a bone,
 And several others trailed along, including Deacon Stone.
 My Dad was sure dumfounded when the Deacon said "I'll stay"
 And tried to fill an inside straight (as he was shy a tray).
 The Deacon long was labelled "tight," and never spent a cent
 Except on cats and clothing, and of course his booze and rent.
 And alongside of each player was a glass of colored cheer—
 Dad took some of all of them from whiskey straight to beer.
 It wasn't very hard for Dad—the play was so intense,
 And then you know that was his job—imbibing evidence!

That party broke up rather late with Dad out for the count.
 My Maw was standing on the porch to see him stagger and mount
 The steps that broke the level of the lawn before the house;
 With shoes in hand, he tried to walk as noiseless as a mouse.
 He figured not and cared the less that Joe had blown the works
 With a line of talk to wake the dead and even scare the Turks!
 'Twas but a moment later that he owned up taking a drink,
 'Twas then that Maw sat on the stairs and tried so hard to think
 Of reasons why my Dad should fall into such evil ways
 While he was out crusading with two white-ribboned jays!

Now Dad, if you'll be guided by the prayer of a dutiful son,
 Remember what the finish was of a task you'd but begun;
 Let your efforts be domestic; don't venture near the Seine
 Where the liquor flows more common than the fall of pouring
 rain!
 And if they turn Wisconsin dry, I hope they won't forget
 To build a dam 'round Prair' du Chien and keep it wringing wet!

LETTER, APRIL 12TH, TO P. A. DILLON.—A remarkable fact about drinking in France is that drunkenness is almost unknown. Incidentally, there are no swinging doors in Paris—except in a very few Americanized bars—because if there were, it would interfere with business, but it has not quite

reached the state where two doors are necessary, one marked "Entree" and the other "Sortie." The Frenchman does not gulp down his liquor to make way for more, as the American does. A glass of wine or beer should last at least one hour and forty-three minutes, or else the drinker may be required to give a good reason for his disgusting haste.

We have been entertained now and then by the long-range gun that the Huns are using on Paris. Their best (?) results were obtained when they dropped a shell thru the roof of the Church of St. Gervais on Good Friday, killing or wounding about two hundred worshippers. Otherwise, this gun only has what might be termed local results. It does not do nearly the damage that a gun of its calibre would do if fired at ordinary artillery ranges and from an ordinary gun. The people do not seem to be much worried about it, either, and everything moves along about the same as without it.

LETTER, APRIL 15TH, TO M. L. SIPSER.—I saw quite a crowd when I left the Metro this morning. It was in front of the imposing Gare de Lyon, and I immediately asked myself if this was another of those infernal French holidays that prevent a man doing a day's work in American fashion, but on second glance, I saw that I was quite mistaken. The crowd was composed mostly of youths, probably about eighteen or nineteen years old, and almost every one of them carried a small knapsack slung over one shoulder. I then knew what it was. It was the Class of 1919 gathering at the railroad station to go to a concentration camp somewhere, and from there to where? The Great Beyond for some, a marred and scarred future for others, but hardships for all, but the future did not seem to

bother them in the least. In the crowd also were numbers of women, some young and others old, some in black and others probably doubting not but what they soon would be; but there was not the slightest sign of a tear. Perhaps that would come later when the train left. A strictly military train in France is somewhat uncertain of the exact minute of its departure, so I could not wait. Furthermore, it is less sure of the hour of its arrival.

These lads had all sorts of musical instruments—mouth organs, bugles, accordians and so on—and they were indeed a happy and gay lot. No, France is not finished yet by any manner of means. When you get into conversation with a man, you might find that he, individually, is rather tired of the whole business, but you will have to probe deeply to find it out. To the whole world, however, he has just begun to fight.

And this Class of 1919—mere youngsters—seem gay and eager to get into the fight. It is but another phase of the French "Don't give up the ship," with the carefree lads of yesterday rushing to be the seasoned and war-stained veterans of to-morrow.

I had an amusing experience on a railroad train the other day. I was travelling first-class, and in came a very pleasant tho buxom lady of perhaps forty. She was accompanied by the usual assortment of baggage consisting of two handbags, several paper bundles, an umbrella, a mesh market bag, a bird cage or two, a 1914 model Ford, a wine bottle and a couple of blankets, and was blithely discussing God-knows-what with God-knows-whom, when the Controleur came around and yelled something that sounded like "Brrrrl'n Br'ge, ch'nge fr C'ity Haaaaall" adding the customary "sil vous plaît," in a tone that seemed more like

"gimme." I produced my yellow ticket (first-class) and she showed hers, a green one (second class). In several thousand words, she was told that she was in a first-class coach, and after the argument went on for fifty or sixty kilometers (it was a slow train too), and had been joined in by everyone in the compartment, excepting myself for obvious reasons, it wound up with an ultimatum from the Contrôleur that she could stand in the first-class coach for the price of her seat in the second-class. And of course, as soon as the exalted gold-braided and l'espangled official turned his back, she resumed her seat, with a complacent but injured air.

It reminded me very much of America, it was so different. I did not enter into the argument for I was afraid that I might introduce some direct American methods, and thereby spoil the comic opera effect!

LETTER, APRIL 25TH.—I have been relieved officially of the censoring job, for which many thanks. For the past two months another Lieutenant has been doing the work, tho I have been obliged to retain responsibility for the seal, but I have at last been relieved, and have taken receipt therefor from this other teniente.

LETTER, MAY 2ND.—We changed apartments yesterday, and now live at 12-bis Avenue MacMahon, which is in a much better section of town. The apartment itself is not quite as nice as the other one, but I am sure that we will get along all right in our new quarters. Our maid moved with us, which is fortunate. One of Capt. Robb's friends, a Capt. Davis (West Pointer), 3rd Cavalry, Assistant Adjutant of U. S. Troops in Paris, is going to live with us.

LETTER, MAY 4TH.—We now have ourselves fairly in order in the new apartment, and I believe we will like it here quite as well as in the old place. There are a few matters that do not seem to be quite as comfortable as formerly, being in an older building, but it is in a much better and more interesting quarter, and I think we have made a wise change. Capt. Davis moved in to-day. We have four bedrooms instead of three as formerly.

I had dinner last Sunday evening with Capt. Robb at the home of a French lawyer, who invited some American officers to dine with him, and the officer in charge of such invitations turned it over to Robb and me. This gentleman spoke excellent English, and we had both a good meal and a very enjoyable evening.

Last Thursday evening I had dinner with another Frenchman, whom I had met a number of times previously, and was asked to bring Capt. Robb along. We again had a good time, with considerable music, as there were several present who could play the piano and sing.

LETTER, MAY 10TH.—Our offices have been moved, and now I live only six minutes' walk away from work! My two rooms contain about double the floor space that I had formerly, and are located on the fourth floor of the Elysée Palace Hotel, which was formerly one of the best hotels in Paris. My desk is alongside a window that overlooks the Avenue des Champs-Élysées. I am flanked by Colonels, Majors and Captains, and cannot quite understand why a poor, lowly Second "Loot" should fall heir to any such portion of good luck.

Lately, I have played ball a bit in the Tuilleries Gardens at noontime, the French gathering about

to watch the fun. There are about eight or ten of us who get a half hour or so of this each day, and I am glad to get the exercise.

MOTHER'S DAY LETTER, MAY 12TH.—

My Own Dear Mother:

I could not permit Mother's Day to pass without a line to my dear, brave, and now somewhat lonely little Mother.

I am surrounded by pleasure and gaiety, in spite of the war and its toll of human sadness, but I must admit to you that I have frequent spells of deep thinking—spells when I recall the many, many times that you have advised and guided me, cajoled and chided me, but always with the one sole purpose: to make me a fit son of such a wonderful Mother.

Had I no Mother to whom I want to return, I would be content to stay in Paris for the rest of my life. I have taken walks on many evenings with Lieut. Brumhall, and at some time or other I always come back to the subject of my Mother! Yes, dear old lady, I am thousands of miles from you, and don't know when we will be together again, but I hope you will realize that you are still my loving little Mother. I remember well when, on some occasions, I almost became a wayward son—and, of course, it was Mother who shook me back onto the Path of Better Sense. Oh, how I pity the fellows who have no Mother to write to this day!

So, just remember the baby boy of yours who still loves you and always will, and try to realize that the years of worry, toil and patience that have been yours are now bearing fruit in the form of the love of a man full-grown, for his dear, little, old lady Mother!

LETTER, MAY 15TH.—I spent last Sunday with some business friends at the beautiful suburb of St. Germain. One cannot appreciate the beauties of French landscape by reading books; it must be seen to be fully understood. I am quite in love with France, and expect, before very long, to be quite a frog-eater myself.

LETTER, MAY 20TH.—Yesterday I went to the Aviation Field at Villacoublay, which is near Paris, with Capt. Bee Osborne of the American Aviation Section. It is an enormous field; one can hardly see from one end to the other, tho yesterday being Sunday, there was little doing.

While at the field, I saw a German Gotha night bombing plane that had been captured undamaged by the Belgians. It is an enormous machine of sinister appearance, and one can understand what power of destruction it has, upon being told its carrying capacity, and seeing its bomb racks and releasing mechanism.

I am at the office now; it is 6.10 P. M., and by 6.30 I will be HOME in a tub of cold water! Oh, the Battle of Paris is dreadful!

LETTER, MAY 24TH.—We have had a couple of air raids this week, and one of them made me really angry. On Tuesday night last I turned in at about ten o'clock, and promptly fell asleep. About a half hour later, I was awakened by the sirens blowing the alert. I listened for a while to the artillery barrage fire, and fell asleep again. Then they blew the "all clear" signal directly below my window—in order to wake me up to tell me that I could go to sleep once more! On Wednesday, we had two alerts in one night, thereby establishing a record for Paris, I believe.

These air raids are no longer variety, they are almost monotonous.

LETTER, LE MANS, MAY 27TH, TO P. A. DILLON.—As you can see by the letterhead (Hotel Continental, Le Mans), I am away from Paris, this being a short business trip.

I am kept quite busy with my work, but have been very fortunate in having two officers assigned to me for duty. Strange as it may seem, both of these are First Lieutenants, and naturally outrank me, tho I am still in command. It is a very queer twist, and is rather a difficult proposition to handle, calling for the use of considerable diplomacy. It is much too early, however, to say just how it is going to work out.

The country I am going thru is really wonderful. Everything is green, and one is almost made to think that this is our own country. The houses and people are different, to be sure, but Nature is quite the same—fields of daisies, buttercups and clover—and the trees are almost exactly the same, except perhaps for a larger proportion of poplar and willow. The soil itself seems to be remarkably fertile and in spite of the war is still well kept.

I had the pleasure yesterday of taking an auto ride thru some charming country near Flers (Orne), amidst pretty mountain scenery not at all unlike Sullivan County back in the Empire State. It was so close to what I have been accustomed to see at home, that my poor feeble mind wandered, and I had to bring it back with a heart-breaking jerk!

LETTER, MAY 31ST.—I went on a trip on Sunday morning at eight o'clock to Flers (Orne) and La

Fleche (Sarthe), returning at 4 P. M. Wednesday, and in spite of the uncomfortable conditions of French railway travel of to-day, I enjoyed the trip. The business part of it was satisfactory also. In Flers, I was informed that I was the first American officer who had ever been in the town. Naturally I was somewhat of a curiosity, and had to occupy the limelight while I was there.

While awaiting train connections at La Suze, I availed myself of the invitation extended me by M. Voisin to visit him at his home. He showed me over his farm and I saw three husky, happy and apparently well-fed Boche prisoners working his farm, without guards. M. Voisin told me, in answer to my question, that there was no danger of their escaping—they had no desire to, as they had all they could eat, a good place to sleep, smokes and clothes and some pay.

My host invited me to take lunch with him. It was one of the best and simplest meals I have ever had, consisting of eggs, fresh salad, pheasant pie, cheese, coffee and some forty-four year old Burgundy! He apologized that the liqueur was not quite as old as the wine—being only twenty-five year old fine champagne—but it was strong enough for me.

I missed a couple of air raids while away, but have been in a few since coming back—rather I have slept thru them. The long-range gun has commenced once more, and now everything is about as one would expect it to be. In fact, most of us have been wondering why the Boche let us alone as long as he has.

LETTER, JUNE 2ND.—Below is my latest bit of rhyme, which was finished in bed last night, the last two or three lines being written to the accompaniment of an anti-aircraft barrage, an alarm having

been sounded a few minutes previously. From the sad ending of the poem, you can about judge how nervous I was. Then I turned the light out and went to sleep, reading in the paper this morning when the show was officially declared finished.

Earlier in the evening I went to the Theatre Edouard VII, and saw an interesting comedy, which was acted in French, of course.

AN AMEX LAMENT.

This land is famed the world around for drinks of varied taste;
I've sampled almost all of them, and put them 'neath my waist;
I've had porto in the morning, followed soon by Bordeaux's best,
But I long to hear the cheerful call of waiters of the West
As they deftly flip the bar-checks, and yell their cheering bark—
"It's the same old liquid story, Billy: Draw two! And make 'em
dark!"

Yes, they've beer in this great country where it's known as "de
la bierre,"
But it's not at all like that at home, where you find it everywhere;
Here are fifty different brands of beer, which taste about the
same,
But none that equals Ehret's or some more that one could name
To the man who flips the bar-checks, shouting near your home—
"It's the same old liquid story, Billy: Draw two! And mind the
foam!"

I've had fancy drinks at swell cafés on the famous boulevard
That are guaranteed to cheer your life—but swallow mighty
hard—
I've had other drinks, less fancy, at some quiet wayside shrine,
But I still am waiting patiently the sound I think divine
Of the man who flips the bar-checks, and bellows clear and bold—
"It's the same old liquid story, Billy: Draw two! Be sure it's
cold!"

LETTER, JUNE 9TH.—Capt. Robb has been ordered elsewhere, and he left Paris early this morning. It now behooves Brumhall and myself to find a suitable third person to share our apartment with us

or else we will be obliged to move, as the expense of keeping up an apartment without a third officer is too great. Capt. Davis moved to other quarters about two weeks after he joined us.

I have been very busy last week, and in checking up things in my Division, I find that there are exactly twenty-one people working for me, so you can see that the amount of work must have increased tremendously. I expect to have at least thirty people working under my direction in another month. We have had a change of Colonels, and the new Colonel called the various heads of Divisions together. The gathering consisted of three Majors, six Captains and—me.

The air raids and long-range gun have not run quite true to form this week; so little of either that I am beginning to feel slighted and lonesome once more.

JUNE 13TH.—I received a letter from Capt. Robb, who is now at St. Aignan, which I quite in full:

"A. P. O. #727.

"June 10th, 1918.

"Dear Mela & Brummy:

"Oh, God!

"ROBB."

I thought I ought to send him a line of consolation, which I did in these words:

When you're tucked away in a little town the size of a peanut shell,

When you feel that you are sliding to the depths of deepest Hell
With naught to do on Sunday, but to wait for Monday's sun—
That's the time to start in thinking of the joys of former fun
And not to sit down sadly, writing lines of bleak despair
That I've read in this short note of yours—but which I do not
share—

Thank God!

LETTER, JUNE 13TH.—Lient. Brumhall is shortly going to leave Paris for a new station, and I have been fortunate in getting two other Lieutenants to share the apartment. They are 2nd Lient. Forehand, who hails from the Dakotas, and 2nd Lient. Townsend, who claims Mississippi as his home State, so for the present the North, East and South are represented in the apartment. They are both of them fine chaps, and I believe that we will be quite happy together.

LETTER, JULY 19TH.—What do I think of the girls of France? In some ways, I like them better than the girls of America, but in most ways, I will continue to pin my faith on the home-grown and raised variety. The French lassie dresses with much more “chic” than the girl at home does, is more frank and friendly, but in that frankness and friendliness there is the danger of frequent changes of friendship! Yes, I still think a whole lot of the American girl, and really believe that I always will.

LETTER, JUNE 24TH.—I have received no mail from the States for almost three weeks now, with the exception of a letter dated May 31st, which reached me the middle of last week. I don’t know why this is, but assume that it is because of the change of control of the postal service, which passes from the hands of the Post Office Department to the Army on the 30th of this month.

LETTER, JUNE 27TH.—I received word from Harry that he has been sent to a hospital on account of the condition of his feet, and as it so happens that I am going into the neighborhood of the hospital the end of this week, I expect to be able to see him. I am going to take him some goodies, such as I can

buy here, including smokes (tho they are rather scarce hereabouts). I do not believe that there is anything serious the matter with him, but if I find that he is permanently incapacitated for infantry duty, I shall try to get the Colonel to interest himself in Harry's case. We are short of personnel here, as it is. But it all depends upon his condition, and what the medicos say about him.

The business trip took me to Rouen and to Le Tréport-Mers (Seine Inferieure), where Harry was in Base Hospital #10.

LETTER, LE TREPORT, JUNE 30th.—The hospital is a big affair, has 2200 beds, and is situated on a high cliff overlooking the ocean. The air is wonderful, but almost too cool most of the time. All in all, it is an ideal spot for a hospital. I am quartered and mess with the hospital staff.

LETTER, JULY 2ND.—I got back to Paris at 7 o'clock yesterday evening, after a perfectly miserable eight hour trip from Le Tréport, the train being about two hours late.

I had a very nice visit with Harry, and assure you that there is nothing to worry about. He is absolutely well except his feet, and is quite cheerful. I was told that he would have to remain there for two or three weeks to rest up. He is almost to be congratulated; just think, nothing at all to do except eat and sleep.

LETTER, JULY 6TH.—The Fourth of July Celebration is, of course, the most interesting news I have. It might be summed up by relating what a Frenchman told me after the parade was over. He said that not in twenty years had he ever seen such gen-

gine enthusiasm shown by a Parisian crowd! I can well believe that too. The enthusiasm was spontaneous, boisterous and certainly sincere and cordial. It was not one of those inspired forms of enthusiasm, such as one would expect Fritz to show when ordered to do so by the Supreme Devil; instead it was inspiring, contagious and sincere, such as a free people give vent to to express their appreciation for help received from another country. I have always realized that the French appreciate fully America's aid, and the demonstration for the United States last Thursday was enough to remove the last shadow of doubt from anyone's mind.

I was present at the parade, and it seemed that all of Paris was there also. The streets were crowded with people, all were in wonderful humor, and laughter was everywhere. This is the first time in some years that the French people have felt like showing their joy-loving dispositions, and they showed it Thursday with a vengeance. On every side one heard how magnificently the Americans marched—truly they did march well—and while a battalion of poilus was in line also, it was America's Day, and everywhere it was praise for her and her sons.

I enjoyed the parade thoroly, feeling proud that I am an American, and in the evening I went to a dance, to continue the good time that I had started in the morning.

THE PARISIAN MITRAILLEUSE.

It's sure no boast of mine
 That I've been in the line
 Where you brave the worst and trust that all goes well,
 Where mighty cannons roar,
 And dauntless birdmen soar,
 Where sleepless eyes stand guard o'er darkest hell.

Where you think of what you've had
 Before the world got mad,
 'Ere we set our course to trim the heartless Hun:
 But these dangers can't compare
 With the inch you have to spare
 When Paris taxis make you take it on the run!

The oath you took demands
 That you obey commands,
 So you travel 'bout the city all the day;
 But if you don't take care
 And stand somewhere and stare
 At sights—some queer and others quite risqué:

I'm sure you soon will find
 There's more to bear in mind
 Than dreaming at some ancient pile of rock;
 As sure as you are born,
 A squawking taxi horn
 Will wake you—when it's passed about a block!

Or then you may have made
 A most successful raid
 In a little game that's played by five or so;
 Your purse is filled with bills,
 You quit the sidewalk's thrills
 To speed in case to where you have to go.

The meter's cursed greed
 Reflects the taxi's speed—
 At the journey's end you boil, and howl and rave.
 It's no use for you to vent
 Your feelings on this gent;
 For he's French—and will be talking in his grave!

If you took the fools of France
 And gave them half a chance,
 You would make a really winning combination;
 Give each of them a wheel,
 A spark plug and some steel,
 And you'd have these star performers of this nation.

They ought to be restrained,
 They're wild—they're but half-brained,
 But they have their place by day as well as night,
 If taxies were real old,
 Then Sherman might have told
 "The taxi sure is bell!" and Sherman—he'd be right!

LETTER, JULY 15TH.—I saw the parade yesterday in honor of Bastille Day, from the window of a business firm with which I am acquainted, and that fortunately for me has its showrooms along the line of march. I had an excellent view, and witnessed one of the most interesting reviews that I have ever seen.

In line were troops of France, United States, England, Scotland, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, Greece, Portugal, Italy, Polish Legion of the French Army, and Serbia, also detachments of French Marines. Almost all of the men carried bouquets of flowers that were showered on them by the enthusiastic population. Everybody was happy and gay, and it was hard to realize that the front line is only a matter of forty or forty-five miles from Paris. I liked it even better than the Fourth of July parade.

The Americans in line came in for their full share of the applause that was going around rather freely, but I think that the honors for good marching went to the British Tommies. The greatest amount of applause went to France's Blue Devils, and well they deserved it, too!

The weather has been showery for the past week or ten days, and part of the parade of yesterday was held in anything but favorable weather. It seems to rain off and on every day now, but if that helps to keep down the number and intensity of the air raids, I am satisfied.

LETTER, JULY 18TH.—Lieut. Forehand, one of the two officers who are living with me, has been ordered to Italy for duty and will leave to-morrow or the day after. After my experiences changing living companions so much, I am afraid I will have to alter my style of living.

LETTER, JULY 25TH.—I have been spending quite a number of evenings by taking short walks and resting a while on the chairs that line the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne. It is both interesting and restful to watch the crowds that throng there during these beautiful summer evenings. The twilights are very long, and due to the daylight saving plan, it is not really dark before ten o'clock. The air is mild, and this mildness combined with the marvelous twilights make a delightful way to spend the evening.

LETTER, JULY 28TH.—I attended a performance of "Madame Butterfly" at the Comedie Francaise last Thursday night. I had a military pass, which admitted me to the theatre, but I arrived late, as the curtain rises at 7.30, and had to stand during the entire show. It was well worth it tho, for I enjoyed it from beginning to end.

While I was in the hall this morning, walking towards the Colonel's office, who comes around a turn but Harry! He was on his way from the hospital to the casual camp at Blois for assignment to duty in the S. O. S., and a mighty healthy specimen of humanity he appeared to be, too! I gave him a bath—or rather, I provided the accommodations for him to take one himself—and after that I took him over to the apartment and stuffed a good lunch into him. Judging from his appetite, there is mighty little the matter with him. He walks

apparently as well as anyone I ever saw, and he looks fine. After lunch I took him to two places, famous for their drinks, then escorted him to the train and saw him safely on his way to Blois.

LETTER, AUG. 4TH.—This is Sunday, and to-day I am detailed as Officer of the Day, and have to remain at the office for the entire day. This really does not mean a thing, except that I have to be here and take care of any telegrams or telephone messages that might come in, and between times I am trying to catch up with my correspondence.

Last night I attended another dance, but did not do much dancing, as it was almost too warm for that form of indoor sport.

LETTER, AUG. 4TH TO M. L. SIPSER.—We have been free from air raids for a very long time, and the long range gun has been silent even longer, and now that they have pushed the front away from Paris, I presume that the gun will have to be permanently quiet, at least as far as the Paris district is concerned.

LETTER, AUG. 12TH.—Yesterday, tho being Sunday, was one of the hardest days I have ever put in in my life, but I believe that the hard work will be over before very long. I worked yesterday from nine in the morning until eleven at night, my efforts being directed toward getting out a most voluminous report. Not bad for a Sunday in summer, is it? And I had worked until quite late on Saturday night, too.

LETTER, AUG. 25TH.—My work has been changed, and I am now in the Metal and Manufacturing Branch, working with Lieut. Chauncey McCormick,

of Chicago. My work is in the nature of purchasing, tho at the present time I am engaged in straightening out his records. When that has been accomplished, even more of my time will be devoted to purchasing.

The change is most welcome and work is much more interesting. It is not nearly as hard or as tiresome as it was in the Delivery Division, and I am sincerely happy that the Colonel has seen fit to make this change (which I requested).

We have had three extremely warm days, which I have figured out in Fahrenheit to be about 90 to 93 degrees. It was hot a-plenty, but inasmuch as it is the first really hot weather we have had this summer, I don't suppose that I ought to complain.

LETTER, AUG. 31ST.—I am still living in the same apartment, having succeeded in finding two other officers who were looking for quarters. Their names are Behring of San Antonio, Texas, and Kelly of Utica, N. Y. We still have the same maid, and things are going along nicely, as heretofore. The expenses of the past month have been very heavy, due to only two of us living together, but now that is passed.

The new job is going along nicely, all night and Sunday work being eliminated. I like it better also, as it gives me much more opportunity to speak French. I now find that I am fairly "at home" in the matter of speaking French, and am sure, if this work keeps up, that by the time I return to the States, I will be able to carry on a rather respectable conversation in the language native to the Frog. The work itself is quite interesting, and I am now doing some purchasing of metal and hollow ware.

LETTER, SEPT. 2ND.—Lient. Kelly has been ordered away from Paris, but this time I am quite sure that it will be rather easy to find someone to take his place, as I know of several officers who are looking for quarters. It is, however, not pleasant to be obliged to change living mates so often, and I hope that this is the last time I will have to make a change for some time to come.

I spent a very delightful Sunday visiting the beauties of Versailles. I was fortunate enough to make the trip in the company of Captain Organ (retired) of the French Army, who knew what he wanted to see, and how to go about seeing it; so in spite of much of the Palace being closed to visitors, I was able to see a great part of it, to say nothing of the grounds. It is wonderful, and far beyond my powers of description. The paintings, wood-work, metal-work, and all of that is the most remarkable that I have ever seen, or ever expect to see, for that matter.

The grounds are marvelous. The many fountains and wooded walks, the lawns, flower-beds, the statues, all are indelibly stamped upon my memory. I spent a most interesting hour rowing about on the charming artificial lake. It is the first time that I have had a chance to row in France.

We had lunch in a little restaurant under the trees by the shore of the lake. That, in itself, was quite a treat.

A most enjoyable day, and we were favored by weather not too warm, tho a bit showery in the early part. It cleared up and became a most perfect afternoon.

LETTER, SEPT. 7TH.—One year ago to-day I left the United States, and all that it means. I have

started the celebration by putting another service chevron on my left sleeve.

I saw in the paper the other day that 2nd Lieut. Sydney Cole has been killed in action. He was one of my bunkies at Plattsburgh, and took over my platoon in the 16th Infantry when I left it to go to the 42nd Division. I saw him in Paris about a month ago, and now I read that he has been killed. Too bad! The officers of my old company in the 165th Infantry have all either been killed or wounded, some of the latter twice. Many, many officers that I knew have gone the way from which there is no returning, and all of them died with their boots on, giving Fritzies hell all the while.

I am dying for a piece of good American chocolate! There is absolutely none to be had here, as all of the chocolate that the Army is buying for the Sales Commissaries is being sent to the front where, as a matter of fact, it is needed more. None of us here kick about this, but we do miss an occasional bite of something sweet.

LETTER, SEPT. 17TH.—I made a two days' trip to the City of Rennes the end of last week, in connection with the inspection and delivery of some of our purchases. I found it a most attractive city, the following amusing incident reflecting upon the decaying age of France: I was informed by one of the natives that the city was quite modern, having been rebuilt since the fire which burned down most of the city some years ago. I naturally inquired how long ago, and was told, "Oh, about 150 years!" In other words, anything which is not cracked and moldy is new.

I left Paris on Friday morning last and reached the city again near midnight on Saturday. A pleasant little break in the routine of business it was, too.

The apartment is going along fine. Lieut. Kelly has left, but his place was quickly filled by 2nd Lieut. E. A. Bondreau, from Maine, so we are again filled up.

LETTER, SEPT. 30TH.—I've been away again for five days, and came back on Friday, and started my return to Paris with the most famous cold in history. I still have it, and if it wasn't that I put myself to bed at four o'clock Saturday afternoon, I am sure that I would now be suffering from a case of grippe.

The trip itself was a corker, I had to get up at all hours to catch trains and had to wait interminably for connections. I went to Nonancourt (Eure), Connerré (Sarthe), Fécamp, Rouen and Le Havre (Seine Inferieure).

It was a tough trip, with many discomforts, and I can best give you an idea of it by describing my experiences at Beauté-Benzéville, where I had to make connections between Fécamp and Le Havre.

Have you ever been in this town? Well, for a word of description of this wonderfully thriving metropolis, which is probably eight or nine hundred years old—and looks it. Besides the crumbling "gare," with its necessary evil, the "chef," there seems to be the usual proportion of one café to every six inhabitants, including those who have gone away to the war. It is now almost six o'clock—more familiarly known as "aperatif moins cinq"—and at this moment all eight cafés are crowded.

I strolled into the buffet of the Gare for a butterless sandwich and a sugarless coffee on a tableclothless table. An undersized Frenchman, in a red braided cap, stuck his head in the door, and in stentorian, but un-understandable French, yelled

something that sounded to me like a cross between "Forty-second Street, Grand Central Station, change here for Queensboro Subway," and "Lake Shore Limited will arrive on Track 46." I thought I had better investigate. I went to the Bulletin Board and saw that this uproar meant that the train was only one hour and fifteen minutes late. The column devoted to the cause bore one word "Renen." I then knew there must be some mystery somewhere, and I looked up several code books for a solution of the puzzle. If a city of 70,000 people is a reason for delaying a train one hour and a quarter, why in thunder didn't they run around it, or do something equally sensible?

I waited and the train finally came along one hour and three-quarters late. It just had to continue losing time in order to maintain its batting average, and so, finally, and thoroly disgusted, I took my leave of Beauté-Benzeville.

Speaking of leaving, it is no easy or simple matter to start a train in France. In America, some one shouts "All aboard," waves his arm once, and the train starts. Not so here. In the first place, that direct American method does not furnish jobs for enough people, and there is not sufficient talking to make it effective.

Let us take a look at the way it is done here. The Chef de Gare, looks at his watch and calls his two, three or four Sous-Chefs into executive session, and they agree that they might just as well start the train as hold it any longer. The Chef then shouts, "en voiture," and the sous-chefs go the entire length of the train closing the doors to the cells. The Chef toots his whistle, the exalted rubber-collared functionary, who corresponds to our conductor, blows a conch horn, the engineer opens the steam whistle and then—but not until then—loosens:

the brakes. The Chef and the engineer wig wag cryptic greetings, wishing to be remembered to each other's wives no doubt, the train backs up a few meters, and then the little watch charm starts forward, only to stop at another station before it has had a chance to reach its maximum speed of thirty kilometers per day. To all of this, at night, you must add about two minutes of frantic and delirious lantern-waving.

On this little trip that I have just made, I had an astounding experience. I met and talked to two Chefs de Gare, who seemed to know something, and were quite willing to impart their knowledge. I asked one what time a particular train left, and he actually knew without consulting his time-tables, and of the other I inquired if a certain train had a first-class coach. He almost kissed me; quite startled, I demanded an explanation, and was told that it did and that he had not sold a first-class ticket for that train since the war began. Some day I am going to return to those two towns and capture these Chefs. They are coming to Paris with me, where I will put them on exhibition among the other war curiosities in the Hôtel des Invalides.

A general idea of conditions of travel is best expressed by the following tabulation of the first three days of my trip:

Work	3:40
Sleep	12:20
Travelling	15:00
Waiting for trains	41:00
<hr/>	
Total	72:00 Hours.

While there seems to be no time allowed for eating, I did not starve. The time for eating is included in the first three items.

And such is travelling in France during the war.

LETTER, OCT. 4TH.—I had the extreme pleasure of cabling yesterday that I had been promoted to the grade of First Lieutenant. I was recommended on May 5th for a captaincy, and it took almost five months for all the necessary endorsements and formalities to be gone thru before the answer finally reached me, making me a First Lieutenant.

I sent mother my photo yesterday, properly autographed and marked for identification. By it you can well see that the "Battle of Paris" is agreeing with me, also Marie's cooking. I have surely gained some weight, altho I really do not know how much. It is too much mathematics to get on a Frog scale, find out the number of kilos, and then change them to pounds. But I am somewhat stouter.

LETTER, OCT. 17TH.—The enclosed label is to be used on the Christmas package which you will please send me. Notice the demand! The contents are to be: Three of the heaviest pounds of the sweetest milk chocolate that you can find. That is the one thing that I miss most in this sugarless country. All chocolate is scarce over here, and good chocolate is a rarity. The Frog variety of this particular commodity is far from sweet, very expensive and extremely hard to find.

We moved Tuesday to 21 Rue Descamps. We had to quit the Ave. MacMahon apartment, as the lady from whom we rented it on a month-to-month lease, wanted it back. The new place, from the present outlook, will suit us just as well as the old, tho it is not quite as handy to reach. It is twice the dis-

tance from the office, but in as good a quarter of the city, and I am sure that we will enjoy it there as well as we did the old place.

We now have two chaps from the American Embassy living with us. Both hail from Providence, R. I., and their names are Trainor and Cirino. We changed maids, keeping the one that was there before us, when six of the Embassy staff, including Trainor and Cirino, had the apartment. I have a nice large room all to myself, right next to the bathroom, and I find the bed equally as comfortable as the one I had to give up.

The display of guns and other war trophies in Paris to boost the French Loan is most interesting and attracting great crowds. It seems as tho Fritz is shy some ordnance, to judge by the thousand or so pieces on display. Life is brightening up remarkably in Paris. Many of the lights—which before the war earned for Paris the sobriquet of “La Ville Lumière”—are now lit at night in place of the sullen blue lamps of the air raid days. The fountains in the Place de la Concorde were flowing on Saturday for the first time since they were turned off at the beginning of the war.

The amount of traffic everywhere in Paris has visibly increased, altho the strings of vehicles of the pre-war days that filled the Champs Elysées and the Avenue du Bois are still memories and dreams. There seems to be more push and momentum everywhere, and I am now almost willing to believe that all will be over before many more months pass. The feeling seems to be in the air!

The new apartment is fine! The maid that we took in place of Marie proved a most taking crook—not cook—but was unscientific in her helpings. She did not limit herself to overcharging for the purchases she made, but stole part of what she

actually bought, and of course was discovered. We discharged her bright and early Sunday morning, I prepared lunch with the aid of a can-opener and Washington Coffee; we went out for dinner, and early Monday morning, in time to get our breakfasts, Marie was back in the kitchen, and now all is serene once more.

Lieut. Townsend was ordered away from Paris, so now we are only five. I think I will stage a show of my own, entitled "They Come and Go!" but I am afraid it will require too large a cast.

LETTER, RENNES, OCT. 23RD.—Here I am back in Rennes again. I left Paris at 7.30 this morning and arrived here on time (for a wonder) at 3 P. M., after an uneventful trip, except for a scrap with the maître d'hôtel on the diner, which wound up by his getting only one sou for a tip!

LETTER, OCT. 27TH.—I got back from Rennes on Thursday evening at eight fifteen, after a nice quiet little trip.

LETTER, NOV. 2ND.—On October 31st we had a little party of a real bohemian nature. Joe Trainor proposed a little celebration for Hallowe'en, so we invited some American girls up to the apartment, two of them coming for supper. Two others came in after supper, and another civilian from the Embassy. We spent a very pleasant evening, including a bite of lunch at about eleven thirty.

There is quite a difference between living in Paris and in New York, where a party of this nature would be frowned upon severely by all the matrons in the city. It was enjoyable, and after taking home one of the girls, who comes from Chicago, Ill., U. S.

A., Roumania and Paris, I was under the covers at 1 A. M.

NOV. 11TH AND 12TH.

ARMISTICE HOSTILITIES.

I arose on Monday morning, November 11th, full of hopeful expectancy; dressed and went to the office in much the same frame of mind. Rumors were rampant, and finally at about 9.30, a Frenchman told me that the armistice had been signed. He seemed so honestly happy and sincere that I could not help believing him. I told Lieut. McCormick, and he telephoned to one of his friends at the Ministère de L'Armement. The good news was confirmed and immediately work stopped for the day.

Then started a two days' orgy of whole-hearted, spontaneous and unconstrained joy. Whole-hearted, yes—for don't you think that the culmination of four years of unlit streets, restrictions on this and that, casualty lists, tales of murderous and wanton destruction, could only find expression in whole-hearted joy? Spontaneous, too, for was there any previous occasion or time to prepare for the wonderful deliverance from the world's greatest peril? Unconstrained, surely, you would have to be devoid of all your senses not to feel that—unconstrained because of its whole-heartedness and spontaneity.

To relate all that happened is an impossibility, if only for the fact that the crowds were so dense that one could not get thru them. My own experiences are perhaps quite typical and will no doubt give an excellent idea of what happened elsewhere.

After lunch at home, at which a little wine was added by way of celebration, I went downtown in

a limousine with Lieut. Boudreau and a friend of his, a French lieutenant. We headed for the Boulevards, displaying from the windows of the car a sign reading "Abri, 25 places, defense de fumer" (Shelter against air raids, 25 places, smoking forbidden). It provoked laughter and humorous remarks from all sides, particularly from the French policemen.

At 2.30 I left them, called for a friend of mine, and then went towards the hub of the fun—the Place de l'Opéra. Crowds! Never have I seen anything like it! All the election night and New Year's Eve jams looked like country town processions—completely dwarfed in the comparison. It took half an hour to get across the Place de l'Opéra from the Café de la Paix to the other side. Don't forget that it was all good-natured—no ill-will or anger being shown anywhere. People were pushed, shoved and jammed—toes tramped upon, hats torn off—but everyone laughed, the victims included.

We went along the Boulevards as far as the Café de Madrid, which is just beyond Rue Drouot. The crowd was everywhere and getting worse each second. We went into the Café to drink a toast to the victory and found the crowd there as dense as outside and even more boisterous. Champagne was flowing like water back home, everybody was singing—the Marseillaise, of course, being the favorite—and shouting "Vive la France! Vive l'Amérique! Viva la Victoire!" the glasses clicking to the words of the toasts.

Who would want to eat dinner at home on a night like that when the whole world—except Billious Bill and his funeral cortege—was out making merry? So I reserved a table for dinner at the Madrid, and we left about five o'clock. After more

struggling, we reached the Metro, each going home, to meet again at seven to go to dinner.

I never will forget that dinner. On the way in two girls on the terrace of the Café spotted me, and shouting "*Vive l'Américain*," proceeded to punctuate their sincerity by repeatedly kissing me on each cheek. With true French politeness, I returned the compliment. I cite this one incident to show how the kissing habit was in vogue. And remember that these two girls were with two healthy French officers. Everybody kissed everybody else, regardless of flu germs. I never was kissed so often in one day in my whole life, but I won't burden the narrative with mention of all the offensive and defensive kissing that was going around.

The maitre d'hôtel was waiting to show us our table, by virtue of a generous tip previously given him. We were not hungry, but had a delightful dinner of frogs' legs, beefsteak and French fried potatoes and coffee. Nearly everything else on the menu was scratched off; the house was sold out! Everyone talked to everyone else. The restaurant was wild and the service terrible, but nobody cared. Who wanted to eat anyhow? The city authorities permitted the cafés to remain open until 11 o'clock, tho as a matter of fact, no attempt was made to close up on the moment.

Some incidents were amusing. A one-armed Belgian officer made the rounds, kissing every officer he met, and he did not skip me! On one table, a Frenchman, American and Belgian stood shouting, "*Vive la Victoire!*" their arms locked about each other's shoulders. Men and women changed hats. English, French, Belgians and Americans, changed parts of uniforms and headgear, with ludicrous results, singing their national anthems and toasting

each other wildly. At eleven we left. Someone stole my overseas cap, but I borrowed a hat from a hospital corps sergeant and got home in that. But why worry—wasn't it worth it?

The next day was just as bad. I went to the office in the morning, but there was absolutely no work. At noon, I went downtown to a little tea room I know on Rue de l'Échelle, with the same friend, and after lunch we made another tour of the Boulevards as far as the Porte St. Denis. We stood watching the crowd until four o'clock, and then walked thru Rue St. Denis to the Place de l'Hotel de Ville, where we listened to a concert by the band of the Garde Municipale. Then to the home of some friends, to sample some of their private stock, which was reserved only for very special occasions. I went home for supper, and afterwards to the home of some other friends for further celebration, finally getting home at midnight, dead tired after two days of boisterous, nerve-racking celebration.

I can't possibly describe all of the laughable and original things I saw. Countless effigies of the now crownless Kaiser and his silly son were held aloft by delirious poilus; German helmets, "abri" signs, skeletons representing the Clown Quince's own private regiment; these are but samples of what the crowd used to show their feelings. They took the guns from the Place de la Concorde and paraded thru the streets with them, the police not attempting to interfere, in fact, not wanting to. The street lamps were lit, lights brightened the café terraces that had been dark but a few days before, festoons of colored lights were draped on the walls of buildings, and in some cases across the street. Above all were the masses of flags and bunting—the bright colors of the Allies and the United States seeming to proclaim the approaching dawn of Peace.

The statues of Brest, Rouen, Lille and Strasbourg in the Place de la Concorde were beautifully decorated, particularly that of Strasbourg. The crowd stood around it as tho it were a living thing, and men at various times harangued the crowd on the subject of the now returned Lost Provinces.

The Eiffel Tower showed bright lights at its top. The enormous anti-aircraft searchlights waved an enthusiastic greeting across the darkened heavens. From West to East and from North to South these bright eyes seemed to tell me that the storm had passed—never more to return.

It is over—this celebration! And I am happy it was my excellent good luck to have been able to see it all, to throw myself carefree into the business of celebrating the approach of world-wide peace and happiness.

LETTER, NOV. 22ND.—The Alsace-Lorraine Celebration of last Sunday was a much tamer affair than that on November 11th. I saw the parade from the windows of the Elysée Palace Hotel, and after the parade went to Fouquet's and celebrated in honor of the return of the Lost Provinces.

The streets of Paris are now quite well illuminated at night, and it is a pleasure to be abroad after dark!

FATHER'S DAY LETTER, NOV. 24TH.

Dear Dad:

At last the daddies have come into their own, and a special day has been set aside for the men of the A. E. F. to write to them—for once neglecting the Mothers!

We are informed that we can tell what we have seen, giving the names of places, dates, organiza-

tions, etc., but in the famous Battle of Paris or the storming of Cognac Hill, in both of which I have actively participated, perhaps the less said the better.

But you know that it is not my fault that I am on S. O. S. duty in the Q. M. C. The Q. M. C. was not my choice. I have done my bit as I had been told to do, and hope that by so doing, I have caused you to feel a measure of pride; enough, at least, to enable you to hold your head high along with the rest of the daddies, whose boys are over here.

And let me tell you, Dad, that I don't know a single Yank here who does not want to get back to his folks! Here in Paris we consider we have "the cream of the A. E. F.," and still we yearn, all of us, for our own firesides, the homes where we can find our parents, relatives and friends, where we can talk and be sure to be understood, where things seem to us to be natural and as God intended they should be.

And those very firesides would not be worth returning to if it were not for the daddies—the ones who have worked long and hard to give their sons an education and the other requisites that make the boys more fit for a larger place under the sun!

So don't think, Dad, that because I have addressed my envelopes to mother, that you have ever been forgotten. I am coming back some day and then for a grand reunion! I am longing for it now!

LETTER, DEC. 4TH.—I had a good view of His Majesty, King George V, last Thursday, and hope to have the same opportunity to-morrow of seeing the King of the Belgians.

Lieut. Behring, who is living in the apartment with us, was taken to the hospital at Neuilly about ten days ago with an attack of influenza, which

quickly developed into pneumonia, but he is now well on the road to recovery. He was lucky that he only had a comparatively slight touch of pneumonia, and that he had the proper medical attention in good time.

LETTER, DEC. 9TH.—I saw the arrival of King Albert on Thursday last, from a well elevated position on the Avenue du Bois. It was interesting, but almost everyone in Paris feels that the receptions accorded to the Kings of England and Belgium in no way will compare with that which will be extended to President Wilson next Saturday. It is reported that he will arrive at Porte Dauphine at ten in the morning, whereas the two monarchs arrived at two thirty in the afternoon.

Lieut. Bondreau, who is the Railroad Transportation Officer at Headquarters in Paris, has been selected to accompany the Presidential trains from Brest to Paris, and make arrangements for their loading and unloading. He is lucky, for that is quite an honor to be bestowed upon a shavetail.

I went to theatre twice last week. I saw "La Verité toute Nue," at the Theatre du Gymnase, and "Phi-Phi" at La Bouffe-Parisienne, both of which were excellent. As a matter of fact I have been to quite a number of shows in the past two or three months, but frequently have forgotten to mention it.

LETTER, DEC. 15TH.—The President arrived in Paris yesterday morning. I had a good view of the Foremost American from the top of a ladder carefully planted on the Avenue du Bois. I was up bright and early in order to get a good place, and after an hour's wait, the Presidential Salute of twenty-one guns announced his arrival at 10

o'clock. He came along with M. Poincaré, both of them wearing broad smiles, and seemed to be genuinely pleased with the hearty and noisy reception accorded by the French people. The noise far overshadowed that upon the arrival of either King George or King Albert, and there is no doubting now the sincerity of the French towards President Wilson. The people went wild with enthusiasm, and cheered and cheered until they were quite hoarse. Wilson looked like a happy schoolboy. Naturally, I was glad to see this reception, and it seemed that all of Paris was also, for the people were standing twenty deep in order to get a glimpse of our President.

LETTER, DEC. 20TH.—The King of Italy arrived to-day, but the weather was so bad that I did not see the procession. Furthermore, I am rather tired of seeing Kings and such.

LETTER, DEC. 23RD.—I AM COMING HOME! I expect to leave Paris Friday evening, Dec. 27. I am ordered to St. Nazaire, and counting the delay that I know will occur there, I ought to see the Statue of Liberty about the first of February next! I received my orders on the 20th, but am held here for a few days to finish up some work that I was engaged in at the time. My orders read that I am returning to be mustered out.

I went to the Opera on Saturday evening and saw "Castor and Pollux," which I cannot say that I enjoyed, because the music was too heavy and I did not understand much of it. The Opera House itself is magnificent—so much of it has been written by so many people that it is quite needless for me to add anything.

LETTER, DEC. 27TH.—Je pars pour l'Amérique ce soir même à 20h.05! In other words, I am "hitting the long trail" this evening at 8.05. My baggage is already at the depot, my ticket is bought, I have checked out with the M. P.'s, I have my reservation for the journey, have taken a bath, shaved, cleaned my teeth, and done everything else that is necessary for a long trip. Reports are conflicting as to what sort of luck I shall have in the matter of getting on board of the steamer, some saying that I will only be at the Base for a day or two, and others claiming that it will be two or three weeks before I will be able to take steamer. Frankly, I have no more idea as to when I will actually sail than you have, but presume that I will have a ten days' delay at least at the seaboard.

* * * * *

It was here that I stopped writting letters home.

I arrived at St. Nazaire on Dec. 28th, after a miserable all-night ride in a smelly second-class coach. I was assigned quarters within hailing distance of the barracks in which I spent my first night on French soil in September, 1917. There was nothing to do at camp but eat, sleep and play cards (if so inclined) for there was plenty of company. The condition of the camp was poor, there being plenty of mud, and the mess was nothing to brag about.

On January 17th, 1919, I asked to be assigned to a casual company and was attached to the 133rd Company, scheduled to leave for the steamer at Nantes (Loire Inferieure), the following day. To Capt. H. F. Grove, Inf., of Larned, Kans., I owe my thanks for his support of my request, for it was to his company that I was assigned.

We left on the 18th, took train for Nantes, and that afternoon were sent to Pont Rousseau (Loire

Inferieure), near that city, as the steamer was not ready to take us. We boarded the Steamer "Samarinda," on January 20th at 2 P. M., and sailed an hour afterwards. On board was our company and one other and some casual officers, a total of 19 officers and 259 men. As Capt. Grove was the senior Army officer on board, he became Troop Commander, leaving me in command of the 133rd Company.

We took the extreme southern course, passing just north of the Azores and Bermudas, and had a very pleasant, warm and comfortable voyage. The "Samarinda" is a 9,000-ton ship, and there was plenty of room for everybody, with very few or no restricted areas. We entered New York Harbor shortly after sunrise on February 3rd, 1919.

I had the surprise of my life upon seeing my Father, Mother, sister and brother-in-law on top of the pilot house of the police boat "Patrol," which came alongside the ship off Quarantine. Seeing them all so well, made a pleasant finish to my service in the American Expeditionary Forces.

From the foregoing, it is quite easy to judge that I was spared many of the hardships that fell to the lot of my fellow Americans in France. I realize this, and how it all happened is best summed up in a letter written by an old friend from Training Camp, 2nd Lieut. Raymond L. Hill, of the 107th Supply Train on January 24th, 1919, four days after I had left for home. It is written to my brother from "Across the Rhine." Lieut. Hill writes:

"I had been wondering whether your brother had been ordered home, and am not surprised to hear that he has been, as he seems to play in luck all the time."



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